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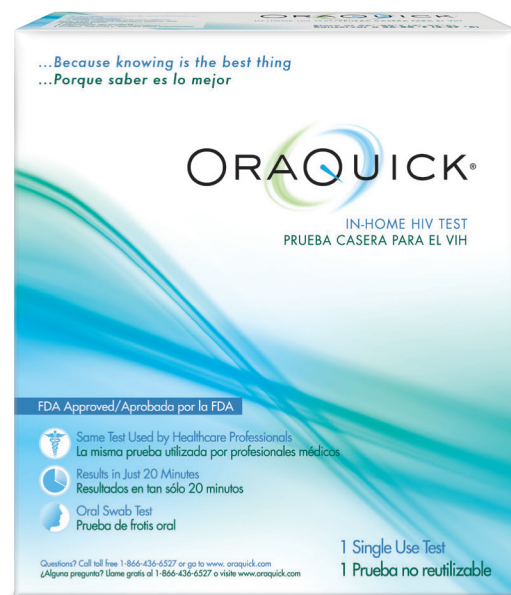
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ON THE COVER

Dancers of the James Sewell Ballet will be performing *Lover* this spring as listed in this 2013 Spring Arts & Food Preview. Photo by Mike Hnida

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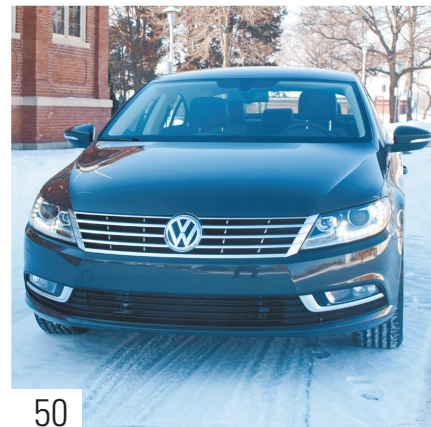
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Editorial

Managing Editor Andy Lien 612-436-4671

Editorial Assistant Linda Raines 612-436-4694

Editor Emeritus Ethan Boatner 612-436-4670

Editorial Associate George Holdgrafer 612-436-4672

Food Editor Joy Summers

Copy Editor Bridget Rocheford-Kearney

Contributors Scott Endres, Ed Huyck, Justin Jones, Ellen Krug, Steve Lenius, Jennifer Parello, Edward Piechowski & Sean Ryan, Joy Summers, John Townsend, Carla Waldemar, Randy Stern, Kristin Thompson, Shane Lueck, Lannie Walker, Kathleen Watson, Keane Amdahl, Bret Bannon, Brett Stevens

Advertising

Sales & Advertising Director Barry Leavitt 612-436-4690

Senior Account Executive Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699

Account Executive Scott Belcher 612-436-4675,
Morgan Ross 612-436-4697

Advertising Associate George Holdgrafer 612-436-4672

Sales & Advertising Traffic Coordinator

Linda Raines 612-436-4694

Classifieds Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699

National Sales Representative Rivendell Media
212-242-6863

Creative

Creative Director Hubert Bonnet 612-436-4678

Multimedia Designer Mike Hnida 612-436-4679

Photographer Sophia Hantzes

Lavender Studios Hubert Bonnet, Mike Hnida, Austin Lindstrom

Administration

Publisher Lavender Media, Inc.

President & CEO Stephen Rocheford 612-436-4665

Vice President & CC Pierre Tardif 612-436-4666

Chief Financial Officer Carolyn Lima 612-436-4664

Administrative Assistant Austin Lindstrom 612-436-4661

Founders George Holdgrafer, Stephen Rocheford

Inspiration Steven W. Anderson (1954-1994), Timothy J. Lee (1968-2002), Russell Berg (1957-2005), Kathryn Rocheford (1914-2006), Jonathan Halverson (1974-2010), Adam Houghtaling (1984-2012)

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FROM THE EDITOR | Andy Lien

AN OPEN Letter to Minnesota Legislators:

My name is Andrea Lien and I am the Managing Editor of Lavender Magazine, the magazine for the community of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT), and straight allies of the region which has been publishing since 1995. I directly manage the content of Lavender Magazine, www.lavendermagazine.com, www.biggaynews.com, and the social media accounts involved with the different facets of Lavender Media. I am not the official spokesperson for Lavender and my opinions are not official endorsements, but I write an article in each of our biweekly issues called "From the Editor" in which I usually examine what's been happening in the two weeks since our last issue. As of press time, bills to legalize Same-Sex Marriage in Minnesota had been introduced in the House and Senate the day before writing this letter.

I am writing this letter to you because you will have very important decisions to make with regard to the GLBT community in our state in the upcoming days and weeks, from committee sessions to the floors of your chambers. You will be facing exciting opportunities and challenges as elected representatives of the State of Minnesota. I want to extend my gratitude and appreciation for you and what you do.

I understand what it's like to work for a diverse population of people. The GLBT community is not homogeneous, but rich with different groups within groups that are unified by the common topics of sexual identity, gender, and orientation. I live in the area that I represent and walk into the restaurants, bars, co-ops, grocery stores, churches, parks, and other places where I run into our readership. I am a part of our readership and I am friends with many in our readership. I see the interactions on Facebook with people in the community and face the music of this magazine's decisions just as you do as a representative in Minnesota. Like you, I know that we more often hear the points about how we can improve over how well we're doing. Like you, I am privy to more information than ever—confidential, embargoed information—that makes it difficult to sort out what should be discussed and what should remain in the background. Like you, I imagine, I have never held as important a role as this.

Like you, I have other things to do than talk about Same-Sex Marriage (I said "other," not "other more important" things). We put out 26 issues a year according to our Editorial Calendar and they cover an array of topics relevant to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Ally members of our state—and beyond, thanks to the internet. I work on my budgets, I hire and seek out talent, I talk to our readers, I research topics, I go to photo shoots, I attend fundraisers, I write correspondence and articles. I conduct interviews. I make countless decisions a day. Like you do. And, like you, I have been presented with the crucial topic to cover: Same-Sex Marriage. I make room for it. It is history in the making. And, like us, the rest of the GLBT community has other things to do, too.

Like us, the people of the GLBT community are busy living their lives. These lives might be those of single people who are looking for love, coupled people who have found it, or people who are indifferent to the subject of love. This community has people of different races, creeds, political parties, income levels, education levels, and any other demographic element that can be measured. This com-

munity is comprised of your constituents who pay taxes and have an effect on every industry and neighborhood of Minnesota. There are more of us than you can see, as being open about being GLBT is still risky...but becoming less so each day that passes.

For the people who Same-Sex Marriage will not affect, it is an abstract idea—something unknown to fear or find threatening. You have the opportunity to help them form their opinions on the matter. No, conversations with people may not result in a "You're right—I guess I hadn't been looking at it that way" from people, but you will have led by example and assisted in making room for a broader consideration of the topic. Did you notice how Governor Dayton so effectively handled it in his State of the State address? "Let me mention one other cause, which is controversial but consistent with my faith and my principles and, more importantly, consistent with this country's founding principles and its Constitution. I believe that every Minnesotan should have the freedom to marry legally the person she or he loves, whether of the same or other sex." What he did there was to 1.) validate that it is controversial at this time, 2.) own that he has a faith and this position is in alignment with his faith, and 3.) make it clear that this is a matter of justice and rights as consistent with the Constitution. He did your heavy lifting by giving you clear leadership in this matter. Please pass that leadership and fortification on to the people you represent.

You must lead and educate your constituents in this issue, just as with any other issue that they may not be familiar with. Educate yourself so that you are confident when you respond to your constituents. This will not affect opposite-sex marriages. No clergy is forced to perform marriages that they do not want to perform. There is a separation between Church and State that isn't just a suggestion, it's a requirement. The Supreme Court may or may not address the rights of Minnesotans, so we shouldn't wait for them to do the work for us. These are not "special" rights that are being sought. We won't be wanting to legalize polygamy or bestiality if this legislation passes. There is so much out there in life for which there isn't a gene, but is very real and valid, anyhow. Same-sex parents are already raising well-adjusted and healthy children. And, if you're really interested in educating your people, take it a step further to not only dispel rumors, but also tell them how allowing same-sex couples to join marriage will be beneficial to the welfare of our society and boost the economy. We're talking about people and relationships that exist and deserve to be recognized as assets to our civilization. Stand up for this community and lead your people in the direction that society is already going.

Let me acknowledge that you might feel a bit like a lone voice in the wilderness. I understand this, too. Putting out a Wedding Issue for a community that can't get married seems a little crazy, but Lavender's been doing it for years. First, on a smaller scale with a few articles in a particular issue...but, as of a year ago, we've put out two comprehensive, single-topic issues about weddings for the GLBT community and we're looking forward to the best one yet, coming out in two weeks. To be a leader is to look at the future and determine where we are going. Looking at the signs around us in our culture and forming a vision of what can feasibly happen is crucial

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Closet of the Curiosities: Writing Micro Seminar I

AFTER A reading of my novel, *M-o-t-h-e-r Spells Murder*, I was asked, "Where do you get your ideas?" There's not really a formula, nor are ideas pulled fresh minted from the author's nether orifice, nor are they mysterious gifts bestowed only on writers. I believe that everything you've ever experienced, whether you're gay or straight, of whatever gender, is stored in a kind of "Experiences Closet," that with practice can be regularly accessed to your advantage in many creative areas.

A successful piece of fiction depends in part on how well the writer was able to mine his or her experiences and the specific application of that bit of the self to the text. Of course, there is the matter of the order within your particular closet. Some tidy minds store memories—belaboring this analogy—like garments hung neatly by color or style, while others—I am of this subset—maintain a Fibber McGee mare's nest with a place for anything and everything ... someplace.

Nevertheless, the important thing for the creator seeking a fresh idea or springboard is to treat one's experience repository the way

one should treat a GLBT In-Hiding Closet: Throw open the door; let fresh air and sunlight in and the ideas out. Use your fragments of experience with the same joyous abandon as you did your childhood Lego® blocks and bricks.

An example? I want a new character to have a pet. I remember beloved cats, so he will have a cat (unless he *needs* to have a dog, but that's another seminar). What kind of cat? I like short-haired grays. Male? Female? Indifferent to me personally, so I tailor it to the character's personality. Male. Name? Well, I'm a Francophile, so I made it French; the owner's morals are a bit questionable, so I chose *Louche*. Add details as needed, and voilà! My protagonist (who went through his own naming process) now owns a large, tattered, gray tomcat named Louche. Another's closet would yield an altogether different cat, perhaps a tabby named *Schrödinger*.

The point of this mini-seminar is that as a writer you have a great wealth of material to mine than you thought; a lifetime of experience, and no excuse to lament, "I don't have any ideas!" □

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BOWLING TOURNAMENT**

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The 28th Tournament will be held March 22-25 (not Easter weekend). Entries must be postmarked by Saturday, March 2nd, and received by Saturday, March 9th, to avoid a late fee. Twenty-five percent of the 3rd Annual PBI Raffle Drawing net proceeds will benefit Avenues for Homeless Youth Organization. Visit www.pbiminnesota.org for tournament information and instructions.

**BEARRACUDA COMES TO THE
TWIN CITIES**

San Francisco's dance party for friendly, furry guys debuts in Minneapolis on Saturday, March 30, at the Eagle Bolt. Birthed in San Francisco (home of this year's DJ Steve Sherwood) in August, 2006, Bearracuda is now the largest attended bear dance party and most prolific gay dance event in the U.S., but there are parties 'round the world; San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, NYC, London, Austin, Atlanta, Sydney. Bearracuda offers bears, cubs, otters, beefcakes and other wildlife for your delectation.

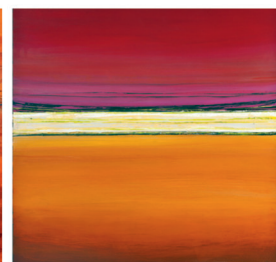
Visit www.bearracuda.com/minneapolis for time and prices. □



MILLER



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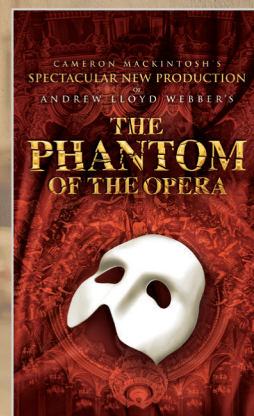
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[By John Townsend]

J.T.

[Andy Lien | Joy Summers]

A.L.

J.S.



P. 34

SPRING ARTS & FOOD PREVIEW

Spring is finally around the corner and Lavender is pleased to present the bi-annual Arts & Food Preview covering some of the entertaining and evocative shows to come to the Twin Cities between March and September, 2013. Knowing that many people grab a bite to eat before or after a show, we're suggesting some pairings between area restaurants and the shows they mostly appropriately match. Hang on to this issue for reference and we'll see you at the theatre!



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FLASHDANCE...WHAT A FEELING, MANIAC, MANHUNT
I LOVE ROCK & ROLL



[By John Townsend]

[Andy Lien | Joy Summers]

J.T.

A.L.

J.S.

ELEMENO PEA

THROUGH MARCH 17, 2013
MIXED BLOOD THEATRE

Molly Smith Metzler's comedy is an ingeniously unpredictable window into how capitalism can make whores of people even if when they think they're not one. Two sisters, played searingly by Sun Mee Chomet and Laurine Price, will play with your sympathies like you can't imagine.

Mixed Blood Theatre
www.mixedblood.com

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

TRIPLE ROCK SOCIAL CLUB

Triple Rock is arguably the most hardcore rock club in town, but it's also a great spot to grab a burger. The menu is full of stick-to-your-ribs beer-pairing favorites. They also have some seriously delicious vegan and vegetarian dishes. The copious tattoos and body mods might be a bit for some to take, but this place is the real deal.

www.triplerocksocialclub.com

J.S.

OR,

THROUGH MARCH 17, 2013
PARK SQUARE THEATRE

Playwright Liz Duffy Adams reminds how there was a sexual and arts revolution during the English Restoration of the 1600s. The Puritans were finally defeated and women finally had some capacity for mobility in a new age. This acclaimed work looks at genderbending and sexual ambiguity.

Park Square Theatre
www.parksquaretheatre.org

J.T.

OTHER DESERT CITIES

THROUGH MARCH 24, 2013
GUTHRIE THEATER

Playwright Jon Robin Baitz's contemporary masterpiece and has been staged by director Peter Rothstein. His brilliant cast plumbs the anguished contradictions of a family divided by the Vietnam War, 30 years later. Few works have ever found connections between that war's downside and the downside of the Bush/Cheney wars like Baitz's.

Guthrie Theater's McGuire Proscenium Stage
www.guthrietheater.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

SEA CHANGE

Before an evening spent experiencing this sea change moment, spend your dinner at the raw bar at Sea Change the restaurant. The fresh, sustainable seafood, delivered directly into the hands of Jamie Malone and her capable chefs, is treated with the utmost respect. The raw bar best highlights the delicate handling, the gentle coaxing of seawater flavor with their multitude of elegant tricks.

www.seachangempls.com

J.S.



(From top) *Or*. Photo by Petronella Ystma; *Other Desert Cities*. Photo by Michael Brosilow





[By John Townsend]

[Andy Lien | Joy Summers]

J.T.

A.L.

J.S.

SISTER'S EASTER CAT- ECHISM: WILL MY BUNNY GO TO HEAVEN?

FEBRUARY 27 - MARCH 31, 2013
HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

Kimberly Richards stars in this irreverent addition to the Sister's Catechism franchise. This is an ideal opportunity to go to the new New Century Theatre in the City Center in downtown Minneapolis. The smaller, more intimate space is perfect for comedy that doesn't need a lot of infrastructure. Here it's the talent that makes or breaks a show. And Sister always makes it!

New Century Theatre
www.hennepintheatretrust.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

PARKA

Why not stick with the rabbit theme and try the rabbit meatballs at the new Longfellow hot spot, Parka? The collaboration of a chef, coffee purveyors, and bakery, Parka is an interesting concept that results in a family-friendly, casual neighborhoody vibe with artful food. The tender, juicy meatballs are tucked into a soft, chewy Rustica bread.
www.parkampls.com

J.S.

A COUPLE OF BLAGUARDS

MARCH 1 - 30, 2013
ACTORS THEATER OF MINNESOTA

Peter Moore directs Ross Young and Chris Whiting in a humorous two-hander about escaping Ireland to go to America. Written by the McCourt brothers, Malachy and Frank. St. Paul has long been a magnet for Irish theater. *A Couple of Blaguards* productions have proved to be popular throughout the world.

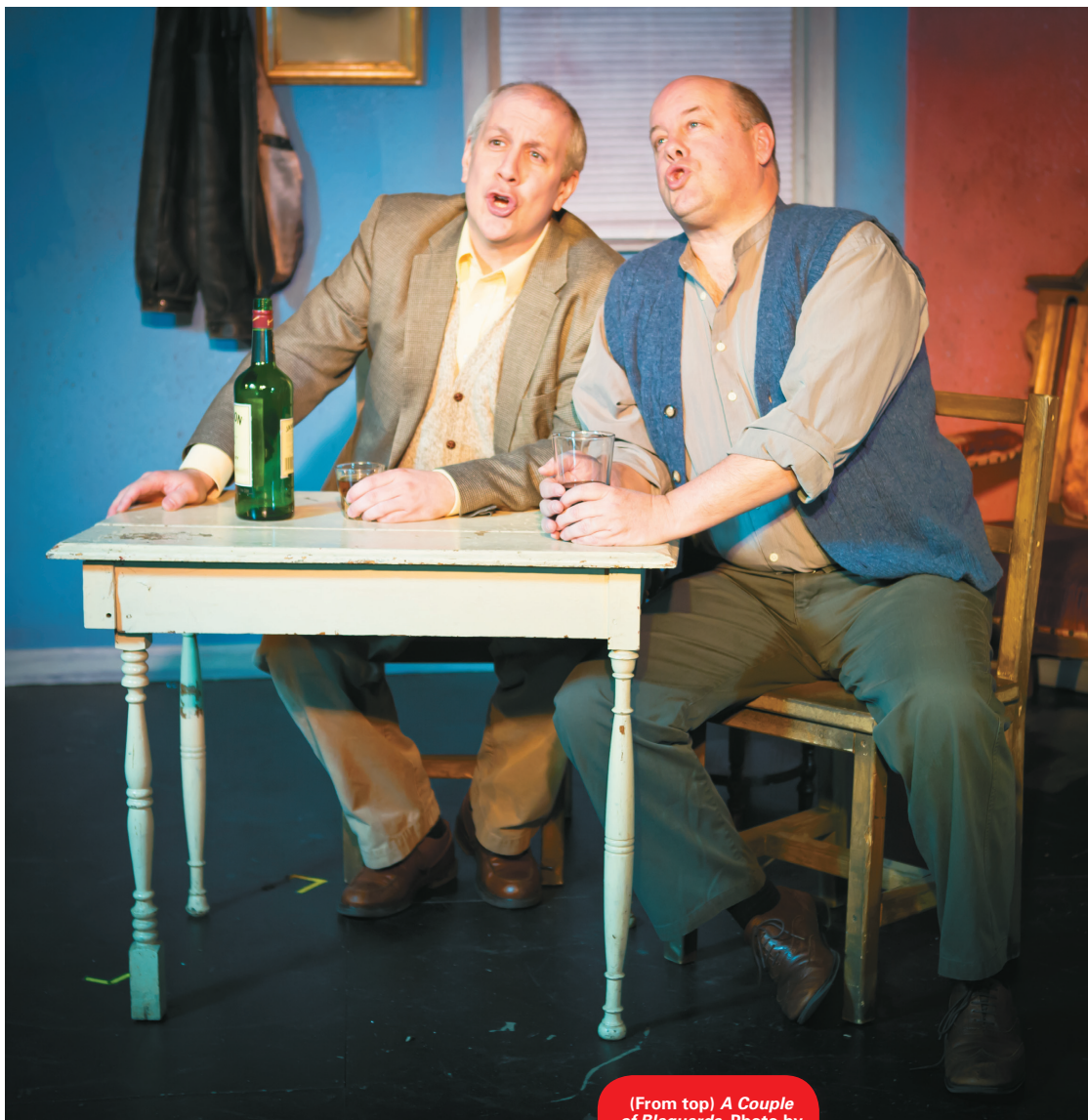
Camp Cabaret
www.camp-bar.net/cabaret

J.T.

TWELFTH NIGHT AND THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

THROUGH APRIL 5 AND 6, 2013
GUTHRIE THEATER

In Shakespeare's time, only men could appear on stage so men played all female roles. That archaic tradition is revived by London's acclaimed Propeller Theater. In *Twelfth Night*, Viola is written as



(From top) *A Couple of Blaguards*. Photo by Nick Koziel of zedfoto.com; *Twelfth Night* and *The Taming of The Shrew*. Photo by Manuel Harlan

a woman playing a man. So, here it's a man playing a woman pretending to be a man.

Guthrie Theater's Wurtele Thrust Stage
www.guthrietheater.org

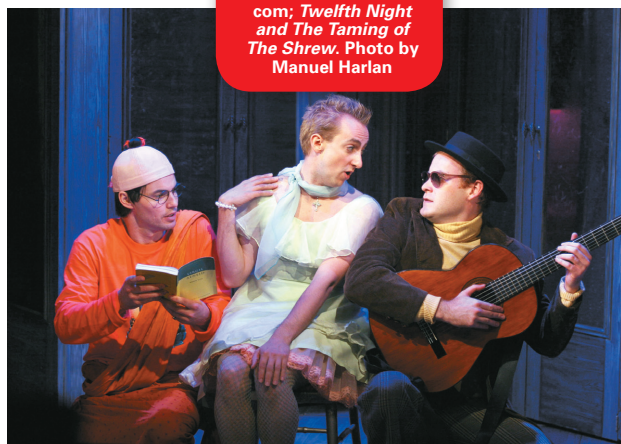
J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

MONA RESTAURANT & BAR

Prior to engaging in a night of Shakespeare, dine in the Old World elegance of Mona in downtown Minneapolis. Lauded for its Mediterranean fare and wine selections, the dark woods and dim lights of this new restaurant in the Accenture building will set your mood and please your palate.
www.monarestaurant.com

A.L.





→ [By John Townsend] [Andy Lien | Joy Summers]
J.T. A.L. J.S.



Flanagan's Wake.
Photo by Nick Kozel of
zedfoto.com

COURTING HARRY

THROUGH MARCH 24
HISTORY THEATRE

Dramatist Lee Blessing writes about Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun who authored *Roe v. Wade* and whose memory has been vilified by the anti-abortion brigades. Clyde Lund plays Blackmun. Nathaniel Fuller plays Chief Justice Warren Burger and E. J. Subkoviak plays Presidents Nixon and Clinton.

History Theatre
www.historytheatre.com

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

STRIP CLUB MEAT & FISH

Celebrate these two accomplished men in their home neighborhood of Dayton's Bluff. In addition to producing two accomplished justices, the neighborhood also boasts one of the Twin Cities' best restaurants, the Strip Club Meat & Fish. The name refers to their grass-fed strip steaks, but I recommend ordering whatever pork dish is of the moment that Chef J.D. Fratzke is preparing. The man is a master of pig preparations. (Or, really tie it together with the play and get the chef's burger.)
www.domeats.com

J.S.

FLANAGAN'S WAKE

MARCH 8 - 30, 2013
ACTORS THEATER OF MINNESOTA

No, it's not James Joyce's classic *Finnegan's Wake*, but an interactive theater production about mourners in the village of County Sligo in Ireland. The audience takes part and may find themselves torn between the parish priest and a spell-casting pagan. Is death the passage from one dimension to another?

Camp Cabaret
www.camp-bar.net/cabaret

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

THE LOCAL

Nowhere better embraces the Irish way of dining than the Local. Slip inside this downtown Minneapolis pub and find yourself surrounded by friends you've yet to make. Order up a hearty plate of their fish and chips while sipping a perfectly poured Guinness. If you feel the need to burst into song or tears, this joint is just Irish enough to understand any swing in emotion. Then, go directly to St. Paul to make even more friends at Camp Cabaret where you'll tip a pint (or two...or...) to Flanagan.
www.the-local.com

J.S.

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www.KinseySicks.com



→ [By John Townsend] [Andy Lien | Joy Summers]
J.T. **A.L.** **J.S.**



YELLOW FEVER

THROUGH MARCH 24, 2013
GUTHRIE THEATER PRESENTS A MU PERFORMING ARTS PRODUCTION
 Writer/director R. A. Shiomi's comic mystery play set in the 1970s features hard-boiled Vancouver detective Sam Shikaze. The play's web of deception brings up memories of Japanese-Canadian internment camps. The U.S. government facilitation of such camps in the 1940s is widely known, but Canada was at fault, too.

Guthrie Theater's Dowling Studio
www.guthrietheater.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

ZEN BOX IZAKAYA

Before heading out to tackle this case, head into Zen Box Izakaya for a quick bite and a little brew. An izakaya is a Japanese pub and at Zen Box they have cultivated that friendly, neighborhood vibe. Brew fans will find beer that can't be found anywhere else outside of Japan and food fans will delight in their ramen. It's also a great spot to introduce those who don't know Japanese cuisine outside of sushi. It's impossible not to love their chicken Kara Age—it's like a sweet, spicy chicken nugget-y nosh.

www.zenboxizakaya.com

J.S.

CHANGES IN TIME

MAY 11 - 25, 2013
20% THEATRE COMPANY TWIN CITIES
 Lavender columnist and former editor, Ethan Boatner, has crafted a trilogy about the sea changes



(From top left) *Yellow Fever*. Photo by © Eric Melzer Photography, 2012; *Changes in Time*. Photo by Rebecca Jean Lawrence Photography; *Jackie and Me*. Photo by Dan Norman

in transgender identity between the 1950s to the 1990s. Protagonist Rain/Lorraine/Laurence takes us through various transitions. Transgender-themed drama is long overdue for a mature long-view perspective. This promises to be that.

Minneapolis Theatre Garage
www.tctwentypercent.org

J.T.

JACKIE AND ME

MARCH 12 - APRIL 14, 2013
CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY
 Baseball legend, Jackie Robinson, played by the charismatic Ansa Akyea, is the subject of research by a young student in this CTC play. Robinson was the first African-American Major League baseball player. His historic success story is inspirational, to be sure. OBIE-winner Marion McCClinton directs.

Children's Theatre Company
www.childrenstheatre.org

J.T.





→ [By John Townsend] [Andy Lien | Joy Summers]
J.T. **A.L.** **J.S.**

LANCE ARMSTRONG'S STEROID-PUMPED COMEDY REVUE

MARCH 14 – JUNE 29, 2013
Brave New Workshop

Lance Armstrong's doping scandal is surely a treasure trove for the region's premiere comedy theater troupe. Athletes behaving badly is an ideal springboard for irreverent humor and the fact that we worship them in this culture makes it all the more transgressive. See it at Brave New Workshop's new downtown Minneapolis digs.

Brave New Workshop
www.bravenewworkshop.com

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

BIRDHOUSE

If you're going to be juicing at this level, it had better be the best juice money can buy. There's none better than what's being churned out at

Birdhouse on Hennepin Avenue. Stewart and Heidi Woodman's newest venture focuses mainly on healthier foods. Their juices are refreshing, wonderfully balanced beverage (that can be ordered with booze...you're so hardcore). The vegan croquettes are fantastic for munching and the lamb burger has garnered ardent fans. Or, stick with the theme and order the cheese plate with other goodies. If memory serves, it includes a little handful of small nuts.

J.S.

SPUNK

MARCH 14 – APRIL 7, 2013
PENUMBRA THEATRE

This adaptation of stories by Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960) is an opportunity to feel the spirit of a woman regarded by many as the greatest female African-American writer. Hurston delved into anthropology and folklore. She traveled to Honduras, Haiti,

Jamaica, and throughout the American South. Experience a Harlem Renaissance luminary.

Penumbra Theatre
www.penumbraetheatre.org

J.T.

THE LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA

MARCH 13 – APRIL 7, 2013
THEATER LATTÉ DA

Craig Lucas's probing script and Adam Guettel's memorable music and lyrics presence us to what it is to come upon an expanded view of life. When a southern American mother's daughter falls in love with an Italian man, everyone is compelled to re-examine their hopes, values, and overview of life.

Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
www.latteda.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

PAZZALUNA

Like love found under an Italian full moon, the Pazzaluna gnocchi will have you swooning. Sip a glass of wine and begin a night destined for romance. 360 St. Peter Street, St. Paul www.pazzaluna.com



(From top) *Lance Armstrong's Steroid-Pumped Comedy Revue*. Photo by 2013 © George Byron Griffiths; *Spunk*. Photo by Ann Marsden





[By John Townsend]

[Andy Lien | Joy Summers]

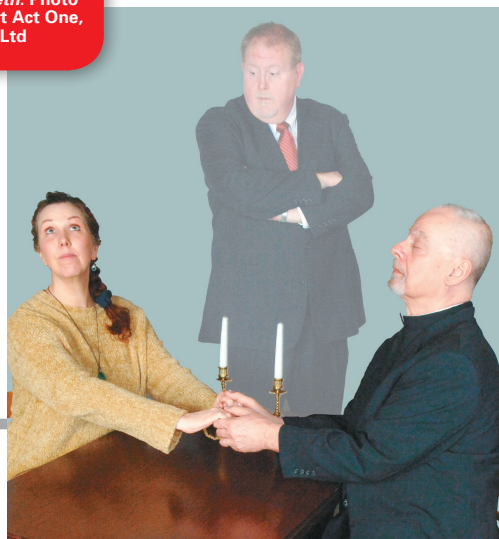
J.T.

A.L.

J.S.



Monty Python's Spamalot. Photo by Scott Suchman; Life And Beth. Photo by copyright Act One, Too, Ltd



MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT

MARCH 15 & 16, 2013

HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

Tony-winner for Best Musical for the Broadway season of 2004-05, this musical inspired by the 1975 film, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, continues to be one of the most popular shows of the past decade. King Arthur, his Knights, and the Lady of the Lake glow in an irreverent light.

Orpheum Theatre

www.hennepintheatretrust.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

BLUE DOOR PUB, LONGFELLOW

What's more Minnesotan than Spam? Well, arguably a couple of things, but while you're out with your silly k-nig-hits, hit the latest neighborhood gastropub, The Blue Door Pub in Longfellow. Their beer list will make your head spin with a dazzling array of local craft beauties. The burgers are much like they are in their St. Paul location, just more of them. You'd be remiss, however, to skip the Spam Bites. Spammy, cheesy, zesty, sweet perfection—exactly like this musical.

www.bluedoorlongfellow.com

J.S.

POP/UGLY

MARCH 15 & 16, 2013

MATHEW JANCZEWSKI'S ARENA DANCES

The first-ever ARENA improvisation commissioned by the Minnesota Composers Forum, this collaboration with Minnesota composer Phil Fried includes a musical mash-up by Alex Berglund and a cast from St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists joining the dancers.

The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts

www.thecowlescenter.org

J.T.

LIFE AND BETH

MARCH 22 - APRIL 14, 2013

THEATRE IN THE ROUND PLAYERS

Alan Ayckbourn is regarded as the Neil Simon of British theater. In other words, he's enormously popular. This comedy is part of his *Things That Go Bump* trilogy and has a widow whose departed husband still haunts her...but it's funny!

Theatre in the Round

www.theatreintheround.org

J.T.



→ [By John Townsend] [Andy Lien | Joy Summers]
J.T. **A.L.** **J.S.**

DEATHTRAP

MARCH 29 - MAY 19, 2013
 THE JUNGLE THEATER

Ira Levin is best known for his fabulously weird novel, *Rosemary's Baby*, but his turn as a playwright with *Deathtrap* has also enjoyed vast popularity for decades and has often been singled out for its gay character. Director Bain Boehlke is beloved for his topnotch direction of thrillers.

The Jungle Theater
www.jungletheater.com

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

THE GRAY HOUSE

Around the corner from the Jungle on Lake Street is a new gastropub called The Gray House. A comedic thriller such as *Deathtrap* requires the sustenance and the ambience of a small eatery featuring seasonal cuisine separated into cheeky categories such as "proteins" and "doughs." The space The Gray House occupies has been a mystery to the restaurant scene, but we have on good authority that The Gray House will be just as popular as *Deathtrap*, which is known as one of the biggest hits on Broadway.

www.thegrayhouseeats.com

J.S.

FLASHDANCE

APRIL 2 - APRIL 7, 2013
 HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

Based on the popular 1983 film, a young woman welder finds the stamina, discipline, and vision to also pursue a dance career. The musical is set in Pittsburgh but actually originated in England where critics loved it. This may be that Brits have an implicit respect and understanding for working class struggles, hmm?

Orpheum Theatre
www.hennepintheatretrust.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

BRASA

If you plan to don an askew ripped-neckline sweatshirt over a pair of leggings for Flashdance, be sure to go "steeltown girl" industrial with a little spice for your dining choice by stopping by the Minneapolis Brasa. The heat of the Creole and peppery rotisserie fare will provide a nice amount of steam should you decide to douse yourself with water as you dance to Irene Cara's "What a Feeling." Then, ring out your leg warmers



(From top) *Lover*. Photo by Mike Hnida; *Deathtrap*. Photo by Drew Trampe

and run on down Hennepin to the theatre where you can "have it all," you maniac.

www.brasa.us

J.S.

The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts
www.jsballet.org

J.T.

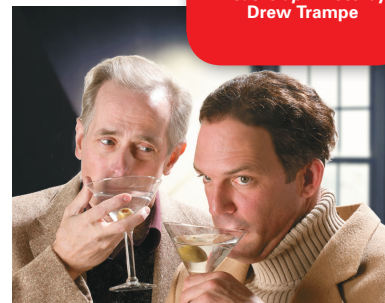
RESTAURANT PAIRING

BAR LUCRAT

A lovely, lovey evening celebrating love is perfectly set inside the Loring Park gem, Cafe Lurcat. Between the soft lighting and the open space that somehow lends to a cozy table feeling, it's hard not fall in love with such a stunning setting. No matter the season, the view of the park or their patio is just beautiful. Order a little bubbly and their lobster bisque to take that romance to the next level.

www.cafelurcat.com

J.S.



LOVER

APRIL 5 - 13, 2013
 JAMES SEWELL BALLET

Bradley Greenwald, Maria Jettee, and Dan Chouinard join the extraordinary ballet troupe (as seen on the cover) to reprise fabulous tunes from the Depression Era by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, aka Rodgers and Hart. Tunes include "My Funny Valentine" and "10 Cents a Dance."



→ [By John Townsend] [Andy Lien | Joy Summers]
J.T. **A.L.** **J.S.**

IN THE TIME OF BUTTERFLIES

APRIL 5 – 27, 2013

MIXED BLOOD THEATRE

Mixed Blood Theatre really challenges our assumptions this year and that's always good. Playwright Caridad Svich has adapted Julia Alvarez's book about the Dominican Republic's Mirabal siblings. Their underground resistance makes us consider those socio-political problems we think are insurmountable are actually not that.

Mixed Blood Theatre
www.mixedblood.com

J.T.

JOSEPH & THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT

OPENS APRIL 5, 2013

CHANHASSEN

In Andrew Lloyd Webber's early musical we see the master's love for archetypes. Old Testament Joseph, the favored son of Jacob, is given a coat of many colors and is then sold into slavery to Egyptians by his jealous brother. But Joseph's gift of dream interpretation puts him right into the Pharaoh's favor.

Chanhassen Dinner Theatres
www.chanhassentheatres.com

J.T.

THE KINSEY SICKS

APRIL 5 & APRIL 6, 2013

HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

Dubbed as America's Favorite Dragapella Beautyshop Quartet, it all began in 1993 when they were just friends and dressed up as the Andrews Sisters at a Bette Midler concert in San Francisco. Kinsey refers to Sexual Revolution pioneer, Alfred Kinsey, and their camp style is wonderfully nostalgic.

New Century Theatre
www.hennepintheatretrust.org

J.T.



(Clockwise from top) *In The Time of Butterflies*. Photo by Rich Ryan; *The Kinsey Sicks*. Photo courtesy of HennepinTheatreTrust; *Joseph & The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Photo courtesy of Chanhassen Dinner Theatres





→ [By John Townsend] [Andy Lien | Joy Summers]
J.T. A.L. J.S.

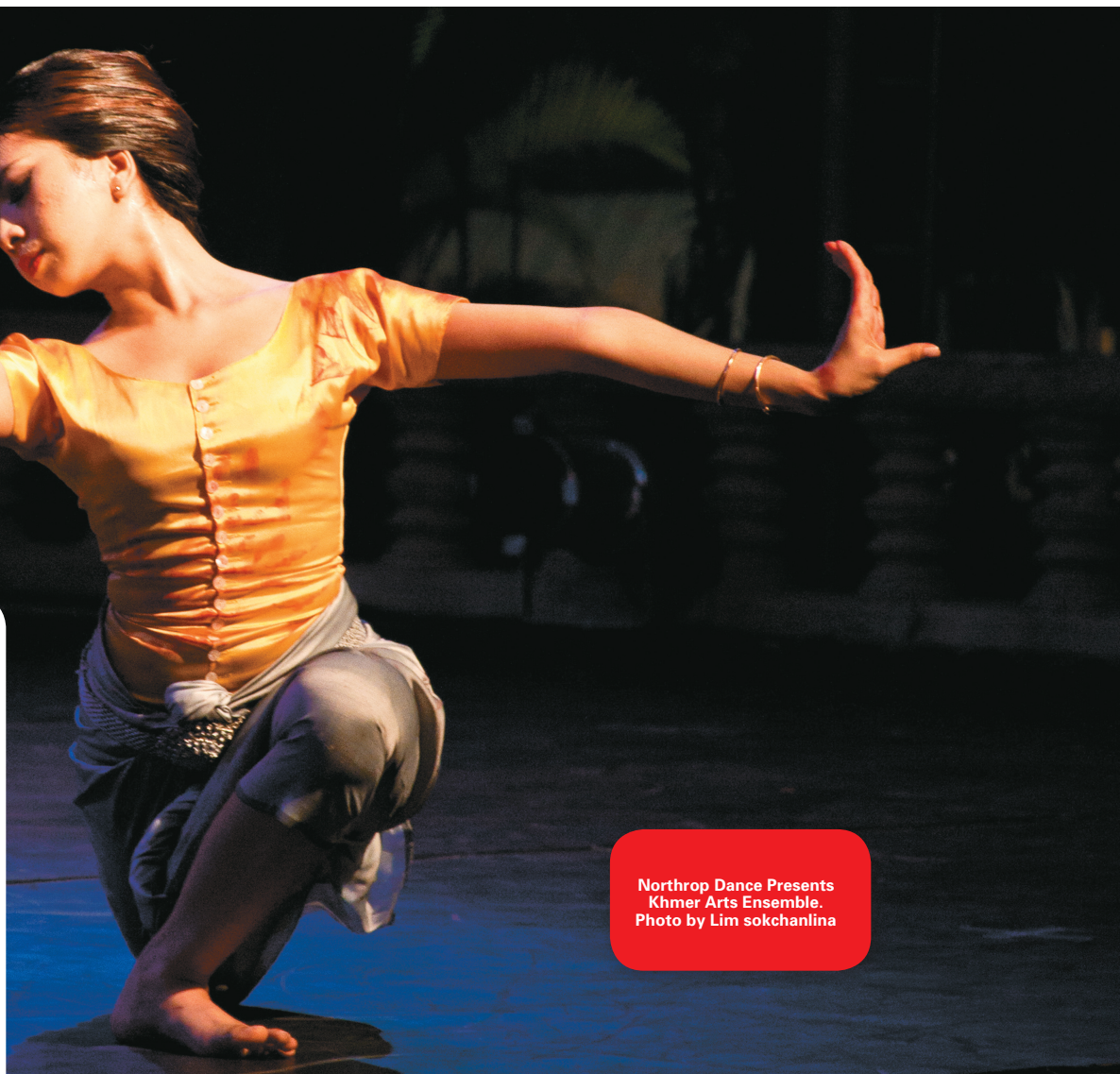
NORTHROP DANCE PRESENTS KHMER ARTS ENSEMBLE

APRIL 5, 2013
NORTHROP DANCE

This acclaimed Cambodian troupe presents a *A Bend in the River* which portrays decisions made in the heat of passion. This village tale has themes of love, magic, consequence, and redemption. In the 1970s, Cambodia was devastated by President Nixon and Henry Kissinger-approved secret bombing as well as dictator Pol Pot.

State Theatre
www.northrop.umn.edu/events/khmer-arts-ensemble

J.T.



Northrop Dance Presents
Khmer Arts Ensemble.
Photo by Lim sokchanlina

NICE FISH

APRIL 6 - MAY 18, 2013
GUTHRIE THEATER

Tony winner, Mark Rylance, and Duluth poet, Louis Jenkins of *Prairie Home Companion* fame, spin a yarn of ice fishing, melting ice, and a snowmobile driver wielding a spear and dynamite. Rylance starred in the Guthrie's staging of Minnesota poet Robert Bly's take on Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*.

Guthrie Theater's McGuire
Proscenium Stage
www.guthrietheater.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

TAVERN ON GRAND

There can be no mention of a play called *Nice Fish* that is full of all-things-Minnesota without pairing it up with "Minnesota's State Restaurant serving Minnesota's State Fish" which is none other than Tavern on Grand's famous Walleye. You can get Walleye deep-fried, pan-blackened, grilled, as ceviche, in cakes...with bearnaise, even. Casual dining in a log cabin decor will get you set to see this world premiere piece at the Guthrie with its snowmobile-riding, ice-fishing, dynamite-wielding characters. Make sure to try the Dragon Puffs for an explosive bang of flavor.
www.tavernongrand.com

A.L.

LORCA IN A GREEN DRESS

APRIL 12, 2013
PANGEA WORLD THEATER AND
TEATRO DEL PUEBLO

Two theater companies blend energies to recall the importance of poet/playwright Federico Garcia Lorca who took on one of the 1930s Big Three Tyrants, Franco (the others being Hitler and Mussolini). The doomed Lorca was tyrannized for his sexual orientation and his left-wing politics during the Spanish Civil War.

Ritz Theatre
www.ritz-theatre.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

SOLERA

Did you say Spanish? I heard you say Solera. Before or after partaking in the story of a literary figure who was persecuted for his sexual orientation and politics, come to Solera as a matter of reclamation. Spanish small plates and cuisine that include sumptuous seafood, meats, cheeses, as well as what Hitler apparently called Franco, "a little sausage."

www.solera-restaurant.com

A.L.



[By John Townsend]

[Andy Lien | Joy Summers]

J.T.

A.L.

J.S.

RIVER SEE

APRIL 13 - 21, 2013

PILLSBURY HOUSE THEATRE

Blueswomen, queers, and seers are part of Sharon Bridgforth's new performance work. She digs into black American Southern traditions and from that vantage point brings forth ideas on race, class, gender, identity, spirituality, and desire. Pillsbury House Theatre is known for its innovative experimental work.

Pillsbury House + Theatre
www.pillsburyhouseandtheatre.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

ICEHOUSE

Icehouse is the spot for enjoying delicious food in a relaxing atmosphere while taking in some killer tunes. Graze on their famous wings and sip on some of Johnny Michaels' cocktails. Bringing together high brow, low down and an evocative dining experience, it's a perfect compliment to this innovative performance.

www.icehousempls.com

J.S.

TURANDOT

APRIL 13 - 21, 2013

MINNESOTA OPERA

Did you know that Minnesota Opera is a global player in the opera world with three towering world premieres in recent years? They also do the classics right and with Giacomo Puccini's Turandot, you can expect the best. The proud princess Turandot makes life pure hell for her suitors, and I mean hell!

Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
www.mnopera.org

J.T.

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

APRIL 4 - 14, 2013

PARK SQUARE THEATRE

Christopher Sergel adapted Harper Lee's novel for the stage. It still looms as a quintessential examination of how bigoted social values and the justice system bring about misery. The hysteria surrounding a black man falsely accused of rape still astonishes. Featuring Fred Wagner and Payton J. Woodson.

Park Square Theatre
www.parksquaretheatre.org

J.T.

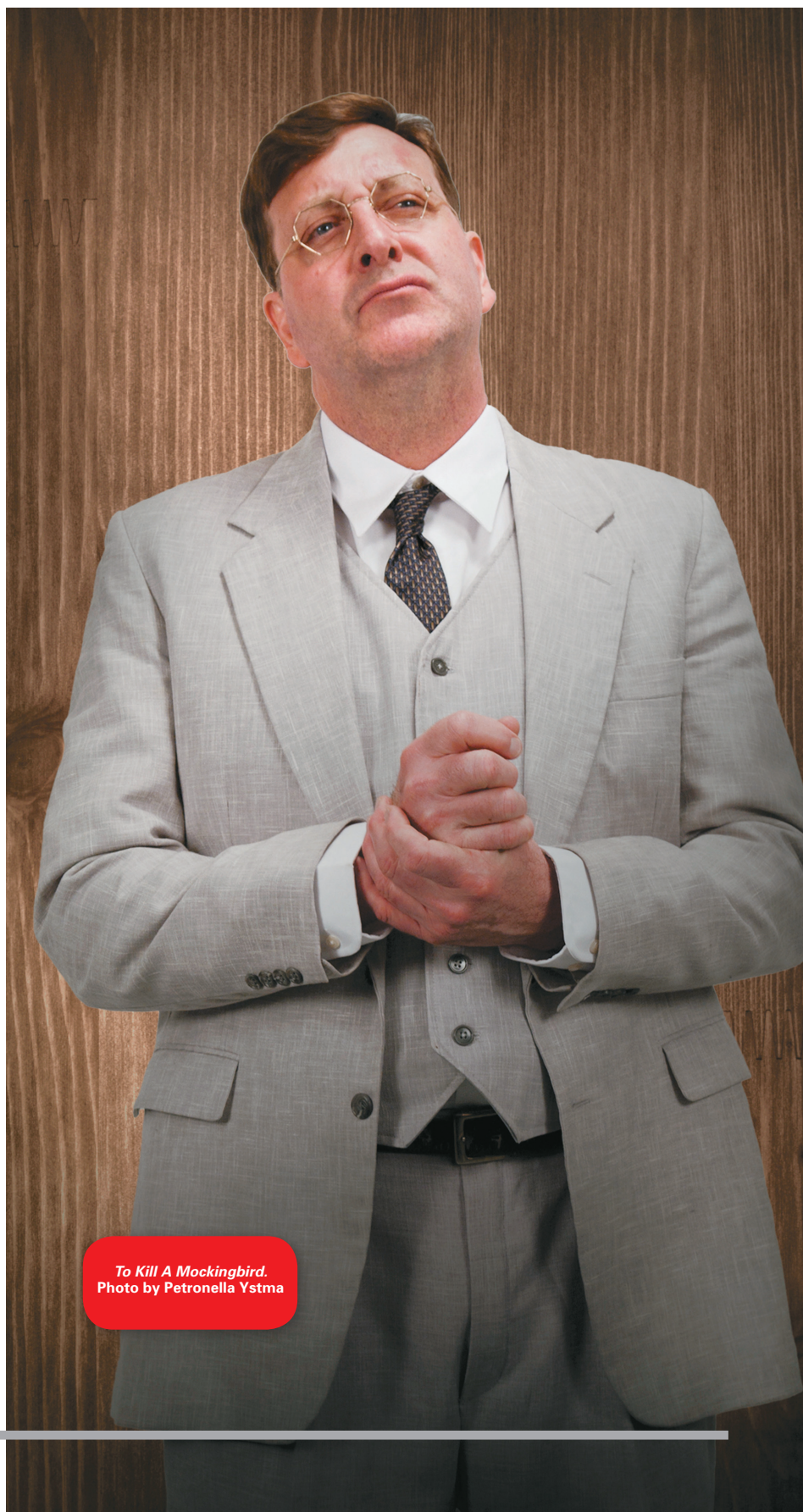
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www.stpaulgrill.com

J.S.



To Kill A Mockingbird.
Photo by Petronella Ystma

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→ [By John Townsend] [Andy Lien | Joy Summers]
J.T. **A.L.** **J.S.**



THIS SIDE OF PARADISE

APRIL 20 - MAY 19, 2013
HISTORY THEATRE

St. Paul's original 'It' couple - F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald - are reflected on as figures of the proverbial '20s Jazz Age. Will Pomerantz and Nancy Harrow wrote the book. Music and lyrics by Harrow. Catch it before the film release of *The Great Gatsby* later this year.

History Theatre
www.historytheatre.com

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

UNION

Celebrate all that glitters at Union where dazzling views downtown. It's an intoxicating view and the

these are some of the best drinks to be had in all of downtown. Try the MsMN with preserved lemon gin, black cardamom, with an egg white and olive oil emulsion. Paired with their "buffalo" oysters it's a daring, gorgeous, rip-roaring good time.

www.unionmpls.com

J.S.

MARY POPPINS

APRIL 23 - APRIL 28, 2013
HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

Visionary choreographer Matthew Bourne is what makes this re-imagining of the classic children's book so intriguing. Unlike the 1964 film, the stage version takes a darker view. You can't help but wonder if original

author P. L. Travers would have preferred this to the film which she thought was too cute.

Orpheum Theatre
www.hennepintheatretrust.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

CHEEKY MONKEY

The adorable Cheeky Monkey is perfect for kids and adults; delightfully cheeky. Try the meatloaf sandwich. It's practically perfect in every way. With lunch, dinner, and brunch hours on the weekend, this is the perfect spot to have a little bite before or after the show. "Deli by day. Bistro by night."

www.cheekymonkeydeli.com

J.S.

(From Top) *This Side of Paradise*; *Mary Poppins*.
 Photo by Photo by Kyle Froman





→ [By John Townsend] [Andy Lien | Joy Summers]
J.T. A.L. J.S.



Stick Fly. Photo by Petronella Ystma

STICK FLY

APRIL 26 - MAY 19, 2013
PARK SQUARE THEATRE

Playwright Lydia R. Diamond's smash hit examines a black family of means. Issues around class divisions come up when the two brothers bring home their girlfriends to meet the parents. One of the take-away terms from the show is 'melanin-challenged.' OBIE-winner Marion McClinton directs.

Park Square Theatre
www.parksquaretheatre.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

SENIOR WONG BAR & RESTAURANT
Spicy family drama in St. Paul calls for Señor Wong Bar & Restaurant on Kellogg. Craft beer flights and Taco Tuesdays are just two reasons to get to this establishment featuring Asian and Mexican flavors; the pork belly on the happy hour menu and the Szechuan Stir Fry should

get you there before enjoying Park Square's *Stick Fly*. Heat it up.
www.senorwong.com.

J.S.

TREASURE ISLAND

APRIL 26 - MAY 19, 2013
THEATRE IN THE ROUND PLAYERS
Young Jim Hawkins versus Long John Silver. Robert Louis Stevenson's classic adventure story

has been adapted for stage by Ken Ludwig (*Lend Me a Tenor*). If you were a boy growing up in the US or the British Commonwealth before 1970 this was a standard.

Theatre in the Round
www.theatreintheround.org

J.T.



→ [By John Townsend] [Andy Lien | Joy Summers]
J.T. A.L. J.S.

THE PRIMROSE PATH

APRIL 27 - JUNE 15, 2013
GUTHRIE THEATER

Playwright Crispin Whittell has adapted Ivan Turgenev's novel and will be staged by the sure hand of director Roger Rees. Those who love the plays of Anton Chekhov and Maxim Gorky are apt to find *The Primrose Path* right up their alley. And the Guthrie has a longstanding tradition of excellence with Russian-based plays.

Guthrie Theater's Wurtele Thrust Stage

www.guthrietheater.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

VINCENT

Before plunging back into Russia, stop by our best French restaurant, Vincent - a Restaurant. Enjoy the dazzling wine and the exquisite food. Vincent Francoual creates elegant dishes in this stunning, open room. The lights are always set, just so, the service is attentive, but never intrusive. It's intimate and lovely.

www.vincentrestaurant.com

J.S.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

APRIL 30 - JUNE 15, 2013

CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY

Mad Hatters, Crazy Tea Partyers, the Cheshire Cat with a constant grin, and a tyrannical queen who chops off heads willy-nilly. Such is the surreal world of Lewis Carroll, whose story of the girl who goes through the looking glass and down the rabbit hole unleashed the modern imagination.

Children's Theatre Company
www.childrenstheatre.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

HAUTE DISH

Step inside a dining room where

nothing is as it seems. It's elegance, where a tin can is used as a serving piece, sweetbreads are served General Tso-style, and a restaurant that has built its reputation in all things meaty, that suddenly embraces astounding vegetarian cooking. Chef Landon Schoenefeld is not just creative, but wildly talented. Foodies will happily follow him down any rabbit hole and find something tasty on the other side. Also, be sure to sample some of their expertly mixed cocktails like the Drunk Monk of Hendricks, Chartruese, pineapple juice, and lime.
www.haute-dish.com

J.S.

THE SCHUBERT CLUB 130TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRA-

TORY CONCERT FEATURING JESSYE NORMAN

APRIL 30, 2013

THE SCHUBERT CLUB

Minnesota's oldest arts organization is now an astounding century plus three decades old! Soprano Jessye Norman is featured at this celebratory concert. Indeed, this is an event that should make us all seriously reflect on just how important the Twin Cities' extraordinary historical support for arts has made the quality of life here superior.

Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

www.schubert.org

J.T.

The Schubert Club
130th Anniversary
Celebratory Concert
featuring Jessye
Norman. Photo by
Carol Friedman

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It Gets Amazing will feature composer Stephen Schwartz's (*Wicked*, *Godspell*) new work *Testimony*, composed for the GLBT choral movement and based on texts from the *It Gets Better* Project.

In Act II, TCGMC proudly revisits Tomie dePaola's *Oliver Button is a Sissy*, the heartwarming story about a boy who likes to sing and dance rather than play sports. It will remind you how far we've come and how far we have yet to go to embrace our differences and truly make it better.

TCGMC.org

Join the conversation: [f](#) [t](#) [y](#)

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[By John Townsend]

[Andy Lien | Joy Summers]

J.T.

A.L.

J.S.

ZENON DANCE COMPANY

MAY 3 - 5, 10 - 12, 2013

ZENON DANCE COMPANY

A truly great dance company that integrates jazz and modern dance with resplendent power and sensuality. Enjoy reprised pieces by such great choreographers as Wynn Fricke, Danny Buraczeski, and Daniel Charon. Then there's new tango work from Mariusz Olszewski and modern from Netta Yerushalmy.

The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts
www.zenondance.org

J.T.

AN ILIAD

MAY 4 - MAY 26, 2013

GUTHRIE THEATER

Ben McGovern directs Stephen Yoakam in Homer's Trojan War epic of the siege of Troy by the Greeks. Lisa Peterson and Dennis O'Hare did the adaptation and Yoakam blew audiences away a few years back in another Guthrie Greek affair, *The Burial at Thebes*. McGovern is a champion of innovative staging.

Guthrie Theater's Dowling Studio
www.guthrietheater.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

GARDENS OF SALONICA

Close in proximity and cuisine to a Greek play at the Guthrie, Gardens of Salonica is a must-have for your Northeast Minneapolis dining guide. The most succulent lamb shank I've ever had—not to mention the light, flaky, savory-filled boughatsa—bring me back to Gardens on a regular basis. Bechamel-laced pasta in the tall Pastitsio square leaves a full stomach and a happy grin. Take some Baklava to go and get thee to the Guthrie.

www.gardensofsalonica.com

A.L.

PILOBOLUS

MAY 4, 2013

ORDWAY

Contortions, imaginative interlocking and interconnecting of human bodies, and defiance of laws of gravity make Pilobolus one of modern dance history's most entertaining, beguiling, and witty dance troupes. To watch them live is to enter into the vast and wonderful possibilities of living within the human organism.

Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
www.ordway.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

TRAVAIL KITCHEN & AMUSEMENTS

One look at the colorful contortionist dancers in *Pilobolus* and I called out "Travail" like I was taking a Rorschach Test. The nationally known restaurant in Robbinsdale is food artistry that tastes like dance. Small sculptures on a plate (or whatever vessel of choice), the food is worth getting yourself to Travail early on Saturday evening in May to delight your senses prior to dancing across the metro to the Ordway in time for the curtain. Game on.

www.facebook.com/Travailkitchen

A.L.



Pilobolus.
Photo by John Kane



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[By John Townsend]

[Andy Lien | Joy Summers]

J.T.

A.L.

J.S.

ANYTHING GOES

MAY 7 - 12, 2013

ORDWAY

Roundabout Theatre brings us the 2011 Tony winner for Best Revival. The singing sailors give away composer Cole Porter's gay sensibility. Revel in such golden tunes as "You're the Top," "Blow, Gabriel Blow," and "I Get a Kick Out of You."

Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
www.ordway.org

J.T.

FIERCE/FEMININE: DANCE BY WOMEN CHOREOGRAPHERS

MAY 16 - 19, 2013

MINNESOTA DANCE THEATRE

The dance work of Emery LeCrone and Loyce Houlton is celebrated by the state's historically foremost dance troupe. The late Houlton actually founded the company and her daughter Lise now is at its helm. During Lise's tenure it has not only stayed attuned to the times but has continually dazzled audiences.

The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts
www.mndance.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

LUCIA'S

A woman in the food world who has created bold and breathtaking works for diners is Lucia Watson. Her restaurant, recently listed as a James Beard Award semifinalist, has delivered delicious, locally focused foods for years, and still, it remains at the top of the game. Relish the exquisite subtle flavors that perfectly reflect the season and accompany it all with a lovely glass of wine.

www.lucias.com

J.S.

ROCK OF AGES

MAY 17 - MAY 19, 2013

HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

Classic rock tunes of the 1980s are the connecting thread of this joyously celebrative jukebox musical. A Hollywood busboy named Drew rages against the machine. You'll hear the likes of "Hit Me With Your Best Shot," "We Built This City," and "We're Not Gonna Take It."

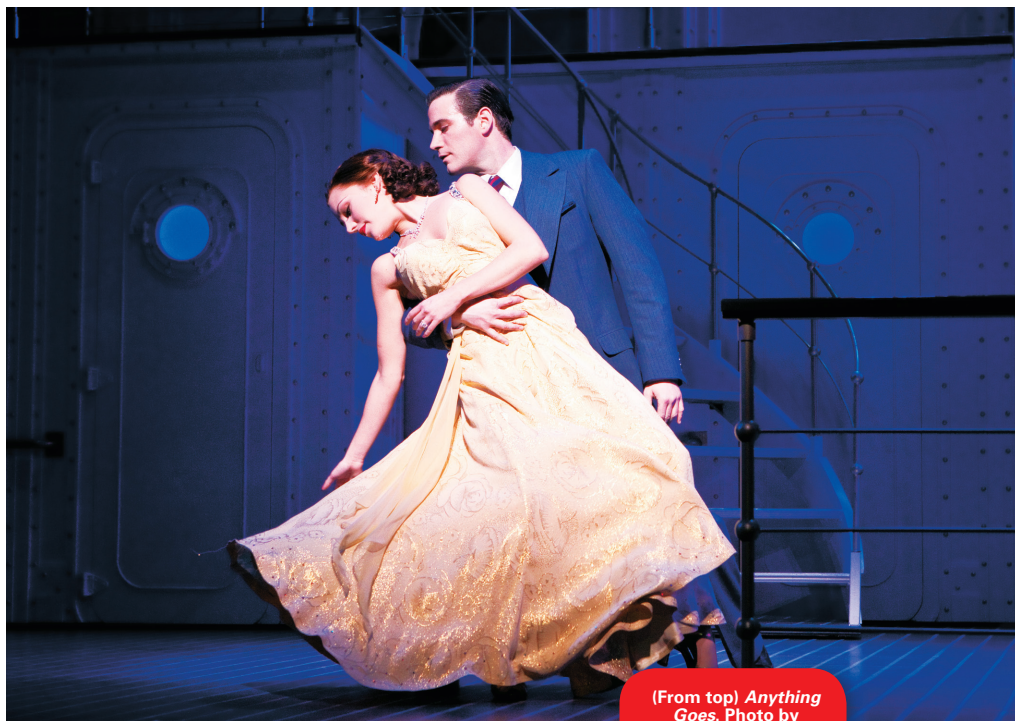
Orpheum Theatre
www.hennepintheatretrust.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

ST. PAUL CHEESE SHOP

An evening packed with this level of revelry calls for some serious cheese. Grab an early dinner--or picnic--from the St. Paul Cheese Shop. Not only



(From top) *Anything Goes*. Photo by Joan Marcus; *Rock of Ages*. Photo by Scott Suchman; Carol Burnett. Photo by Randee St. Nicholas

have they got an extraordinary selection of cheeses from around the world packed into this modest space, but they also make some killer sandwiches here. There are even a few spots to have a seat and dig into the crusty bread stuffed with top shelf ingredients, all selected for how well they work with cheese--wonderful cheese.

www.stpaulcheeseshop.com

J.S.



CAROL BURNETT

MAY 17, 2013

HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

She is THE bona fide Queen of Comedy! And she will take your

questions at this special event. But bear in mind, Burnett is also a great actress. Remember that Friendly Fire won four Emmy awards. Some splendid movies: A Wedding, Pete 'n' Tillie, The Four Seasons. Oh, and her Broadway stage turn in Moon Over Buffalo.

State Theatre
www.hennepintheatretrust.org

J.T.





[By John Townsend]

J.T.

[Andy Lien | Joy Summers]

A.L.

J.S.

SUNSET BOULEVARD

MAY 21 - JUNE 23, 2013
MINNEAPOLIS MUSICAL THEATRE
& HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

Andrew Lloyd Webber's underrated musical adaptation of the iconic 1950 Billy Wilder film will surely benefit from a more modest staging than the over-produced Broadway run of yesteryear. A simpler approach will likely bring out the nuance. And some of the tunes are riveting.

New Century Theatre
www.hennepintheatretrust.org

J.T.

IN THE REST ROOM AT ROSENBLOOMS

MAY 31 - JUNE 23, 2013
THEATRE IN THE ROUND PLAYERS

Ludmilla Bollow's play has proved to be very popular. It's set in an old-fashioned women's restroom where there is a sitting area to 'powder your nose.' Three senior citizens who have bonded there over the years are presented with a serious problem. Some great roles for older women.

Theatre in the Round
www.theatreintheround.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

THE OAK GRILL

Sadly, we've lost the sister restaurant in the River Room, but one Dayton's (sigh, fine--Macy's) restaurant remains in downtown Minneapolis. The Oak Grill harkens back to another era, with the faux fireplace and their wonderfully airy popovers. Order their famous pot pie topped with buttery puff pastry and catch a glimpse of the glory of the old department store days.

J.S.



Sunset Boulevard.
Photo by Laurie Etchen



[By John Townsend]

[Andy Lien | Joy Summers]

J.T.

A.L.

J.S.



Sherlock Holmes And The Adventure of The Suicide Club. Photo by Petronella Ystma; War Horse. Photo courtesy of Brinkhoff Mögenburg 2011 London Cast



Petty plays the little piano to help create Every Day, to the plane crash in Clear Lake, Iowa, Buddy is lovingly remembered.

Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
www.ordway.org

J.T.

CLYBOURNE PARK

JUNE 1 - AUGUST 4, 2013
GUTHRIE THEATER

Winner of both the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and Tony Award for Best Play. Playwright Bruce Norris creates a counterpoint to Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* where the white and black race roles are turned on their head. Issues of class and race take center stage.

Guthrie Theater's McGuire Proscenium Stage
www.guthrietheater.org

J.T.

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE ADVENTURE OF THE SUICIDE CLUB

JUNE 7 - JULY 14, 2013

PARK SQUARE THEATRE

Minnesota's celebrated playwright Jeffrey Hatcher (*Compleat Female Stage Beauty*) combines characters from the famous mysteries of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Suicide Adventure Club* detective stories. Both Hatcher and director David Mann have notable track records for shows with historical style and edified imagination.

Park Square Theatre
www.parksquaretheatre.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

WARD 6

New to the Eastside of St. Paul, but oh, so old. Ward 6 opened quietly quite recently and has been causing murmurs of happy customers. To tie it into *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Suicide Club* is not

to make a bleak commentary about starting a new restaurant, but to give a nod of trivia. As wit would have it, Park Square Theatre is in the Hamm Building, the restaurant is in the old Hamm's taproom...and the Sherlock Holmes stories were set in about the same era as the taproom began. Enjoy your history with a hearty dinner and a side of Minnesota beer or one of their "adult milkshakes" and then move on to mystery with the mashed-up classics.

www.ward6stpaul.com

A.L.

BUDDY - THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY

JUNE 11 - 16, 2013
ORDWAY

The last three years of rock and roll's favorite son. From Lubbock, Texas to the Nor Va Jak studio in Clovis, New Mexico, where Vi

WAR HORSE

JUNE 12 - 23, 2013
HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

It's always a special event when Hennepin Theatre Trust brings in a Tony-winning Best Play production. And, in this case, also the Olivier winner for Best New Play. Handspring Puppet Company contributes to the story of a plow horse sold to the military. A distinctly theatrical work.

Orpheum Theatre
www.hennepintheatretrust.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

MURRAY'S

A story of wars and family with a common appearance of a knife conjures similarities to a war horse of a restaurant with butter-knife steaks, Murray's. Meant only in terms of respect, to refer to Murray's as old and lasting is a salute to its status as a Minneapolis institution since 1946. Find traditional fine dining standards such as escargot and steak tartare as well as the signature Silver Butter Knife Steak for Two and Chateaubriand for Two. Sip some port for dessert and stroll to the theatre in the lovely June evening air.

www.murraysrestaurant.com

A.L.



[By John Townsend] [Andy Lien | Joy Summers]
J.T. **A.L.** **J.S.**

URINETOWN THE MUSICAL

JUNE 7 - AUGUST 4, 2013
 THE JUNGLE THEATER

This musical is one of the surprising newer classics that one would have never thought would ever be mainstream. But its satirical take on the politics of water is viscerally in touch with our time. Water supplies the world over are being depleted, even in our land of 10,000 Lakes!

The Jungle Theater
www.jungletheater.com

J.T.

THE MIKADO

JUNE 15 - 23, 2013
 MU PERFORMING ARTS

Gilbert and Sullivan's classic takes us back to a time and mentality when flirting was punishable by death. Gilbert and Sullivan are often chastised by Asian-sensitive scholars so it will be interesting to see how the region's preeminent Asian-American theater handles it.

E.M. Pearson Theatre, Concordia University
www.mupperformingarts.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

WORLD STREET KITCHEN

Anyone who has ever tasted the Yum Yum Bowl from Chef Sameh Wadi will know the power of that particular craving. Best to nip that craving in the bud and tuck into that steaming rice bowl of decadent flavors. Spicy, savory with your choice of meat or tofu with a perfectly poached egg tucked inside, it's hearty and heavenly. However, if you miss the chance to eat before the show, just hearing the character's name-- Yummy--and you'll know you need a bowl. Don't worry, World Street Kitchen is open late, so you can hit them up after the show, too.

www.eatwsk.com

J.S.

WHEN A MAN LOVES A DIVA

JUNE 21 & 22, 2013
 CHANHASSEN

The gifted music director, Sanford Moore, is at the helm of this exceedingly popular tribute to great female pop singers like Cher and Tina Turner. Dane Stauffer, Julius Collins, and Ben Bakke always roused audiences



(From top) *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*. Photo by Dan Norman; *Psst!* Photo courtesy of Off-LeashArea

at the show's earlier incarnations at The Lab. So, odds are, the same will happen at Chan!

Chanhasen Dinner Theatres
www.chanhassentheatres.com

J.T.

IF YOU GIVE A MOUSE A COOKIE

JUNE 21 - JULY 21, 2013
 CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY

A mere mouse creates utter chaos with cookie crumbs and dust bunnies. Laura Numeroff's beloved picture book has been adapted for the stage by Jody Davidson. The globally acclaimed Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis has a magical way of making productions that are both pictorial and well acted.

Children's Theatre Company
www.childrenstheatre.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

RUSTICA

If you're going to give that mouse a cookie and start that whole train a

rollin', you might as well share with that mouse the very best cookie in town. There's nothing better than the bittersweet chocolate cookie at Rustica Bakery. It's a dense cookie, packed with rich chocolate flavor, perfectly balanced on the edge of sweetness. It's chewy and disappears with astonishing quickness. Rustica Bakery is also a great spot to eat with the kids and has that fantastic Dogwood coffee for the adults.

www.rusticabakery.com

J.S.

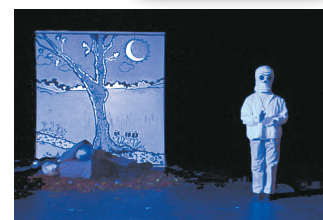
PSST!

JUNE 21 - 23, 2013
 OFF-LEASH AREA

This remarkable physical theatre is now inspired by ragtime, Betty Boop-style animation, and the expressionistic silent film craft of director Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. Off-Leash's *Ivan the Drunk* was named Lavender's Best Production in 2009.

The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts
www.offleasharea.org

J.T.



RESTAURANT PAIRING

BACHELOR FARMER

Psst! is inspired by the characters of Norwegian graphic novelist, Jason (aka John Arne Sæterøy). What is sure to be a hip, artistic evening should start at the one and only place to find hip, Nordic cuisine: The Bachelor Farmer. If you attend the Sunday performance of *Psst!*, reserve your special place at The Bachelor Farmer's Sunday Supper, a set three-course menu of a starter, a family-style entree, and a dessert. Whichever performance you pair up with this dining, don't forget the Marvel Bar for your pre- or post-show libations.

www.thebachelorfarmer.com

A.L.



→ [By John Townsend] [Andy Lien | Joy Summers]
J.T. A.L. J.S.



Les Miserables.
Photo by Deen van Meer

BLACK LABEL MOVEMENT

JUNE 28 - 30, 2013

BLACK LABEL MOVEMENT

You won't find a more rigorous and aggressive style among any dance troupe in the region--and perhaps the nation--than Black Label Movement. If you have sports freak friends who would never attend a dance concert, make them see this and they will be converted.

The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts

www.blacklabelmovement.com

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

PICCOLO

Just as this performance pushes all manner of boundaries, Chef Doug Flicker and his staff challenge dining perceptions with the dishes they

create. Ever tasted Hamachi collar? Pig trotters? Fried duck gizzard with duck fat "Miracle Whip?" In the hands of this incredibly talented chef, they might just be your new favorite dish. Challenge your expectations of what fine dining means and experience the artistry of Piccolo.
www.piccolompls.com

J.S.

APPOINTMENT WITH DEATH

JULY 5 - 28, 2013

THEATRE IN THE ROUND PLAYERS

You can't miss with an Agatha Christie murder. At a Jerusalem hotel a nasty American woman with disabilities and a sadistic tendency triggers the murderous impulse in a variety of characters including a shrink and a Member of Parliament, as well as some of

her own relatives.

Theatre in the Round

www.theatreintheround.org

J.T.

BORN YESTERDAY

JULY 6 - AUGUST 31, 2013

GUTHRIE THEATER

Playwright Garson Kanin's 1946 classic involves a corrupt businessman and his showgirl mistress who come to Washington, D.C. When he hires a journalist to educate and refine her, revelations about shady plans between business and Congress make for serious comedy.

Guthrie Theater's Wurtele Thrust Stage

www.guthrietheater.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

BURCH

Burch wasn't quite born yesterday, but the one time dowdy pharmacy has been reborn as a glamorous, new steakhouse. The room is stunning and wide open. The steak is as meaty as they come, and a likely game-changer in the best-steak-in-town contest. Perfectly cooked and hugely flavorful. They also have a number of adorable little dumplings. Now, here is a makeover we can get behind.
www.burchrestaurant.com

J.S.

LES MISERABLES

JULY 30 - AUGUST 4, 2013

HENNEPIN THEATRE TRUST

You saw the movie but you really need to see it on stage in full regalia to fully fathom just what glorious work this adaptation of Victor Hugo's novel is. Its penetrating themes of injustice, the degradation of poverty, and the passage of time will stay with you. The music soars.

Orpheum Theatre

www.hennepintheatretrust.org

J.T.

RESTAURANT PAIRING

CITIZEN CAFE

An unsung gem in Minneapolis, Citizen Cafe has me humming along to "drink with me...to days...gone by..." as I think of the young men who planned their revolution at tavern tables in *Les Mis*. The motto of Citizen Cafe is "true to self," and the food follows suit. It's honest food utilizing locally sourced products. Join with other citizens and "let the wine of friendship never run dry" in the Standish-Ericsson neighborhood.
www.thecitizencafe.com

A.L.



LOCAL DESIGNER **GREG WALSH** FEATURED AT AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL SHOW

THIS YEAR'S American Craft Council Show will feature Minneapolis designer Greg Walsh in its collaborative exhibit entitled "Make Room." Walsh's work with Walsh Design Group and I.D. inside design has made him well known as a superior contemporary designer. Walsh and his partner also own martinpatrick3, a modern and classic men's store, which has made him a household name.

Walsh enjoys the varying styles of the broad client base he gets to work with through Walsh Design Group, a full service interior design business which focuses mostly on residential spaces. He says, "The fun of the job is that you're always interpreting someone's style and creating something that's like theirs. We subscribe to doing things that aren't trend-chasing. Things that have more longevity...things that might be familiar, yet updated. Things that are more real and less fantastical."

I.D. inside design focuses on selling home furnishings and decor from all around the world. The store also features Ligne Roset products, an exceptional line of modern designer furniture. I.D. inside design gave way to martinpatrick3, a menswear store that offers the finest clothing, accessories, grooming products and more—everything the classy modern man could want.

The "Make Room" exhibit at the American Craft Council Show challenged designers to incorporate several pieces created by craft artisans into their designs in order to allow visitors to get ideas for how to incorporate their own pieces into their living spaces. Walsh was paired with Donna D'Aquino (Metal Artist), Carol Sobieniak (Fiber Artist), and Scott McGlasson (Furniture Artist from Minneapolis) to create a unique living room design. Walsh describes his design as modern and organic. He states, "Paired with simple, modern Ligne Roset furniture, the sculptural delineated lines of Donna D'Aquino's pieces dance gracefully with

Scott McGlasson's solid, elegant furniture. All are grounded by the geometric organic elements of Carol Sobieniak's rug; the space is a modern yet approachable balance of materials and lines."

See Walsh's "Make Room" design and more at the American Craft Council Show in Saint Paul, April 19-21. For more information, visit www.craftcouncil.org. □





She Rock She Rock: Music and Empowerment



Rock band Missing Peace members: Jennifer Strick, Kris Warholm, Jennifer Volkman, HB Bachuber, and Lisa Whitney. Photo courtesy of She Rock She Rock

IF YOU'VE always wanted to pick up an instrument and rock out like a pro, now's your chance! She Rock She Rock, a non-profit organization that focuses on uniting and empowering women and gender non-conforming people through music, is hosting its annual Ladies Rock Camp from April 5-7. Ladies Rock Camp gives people the opportunity to learn an instrument, form a band, and prepare for their first performance in three days, all while encouraging positive self-image and fellowship in a creative environment. Ladies Rock Camp is a one-of-a-kind experience for people interested in exploring their musical sides. Assistant Program Director Vanessa Bray believes, "Playing an instrument can increase social skills in situations such as a band setting where people

learn to cooperate and listen to other musicians in order to create music together. Feeling confident in one's abilities to work well with others is an essential part not only in music but in every day life. Learning to play an instrument takes patience and perseverance." Bray adds, "When people see the results of the effort they have put in, they feel a sense of pride and their confidence in their abilities increases. Playing an instrument also fosters self-expression by giving people an outlet for their voices to be heard."

Ladies Rock Camp is open to all individuals who identify as female, trans, or gender non-conforming because these groups of people are often marginalized by the music industry and society as a whole. Bray notes, "Because of this, we provide a safe,

non-judgmental environment for people of all backgrounds to be themselves and feel empowered through music and fellowship."

A typical day at Ladies Rock Camp includes music lessons taught by professional gigging musicians in the Twin Cities, workshops, band rehearsals, and time for socializing. Participants have a final public performance at Bunkers Music Bar and Hall where they can showcase their new skills.

Ladies Rock Camp is open to all people (ages 19+) who identify as female, trans, or gender non-conforming. All instruments are provided, and all levels of musical experience are welcome. Cost per participant is \$295, and financial assistance options are available. For more information, visit www.girlsrocknrollretreat.com/ladiescamp.cfm. ■



Tennessee State Capitol, located in Nashville. Photo courtesy of istockphoto.com

MY NEW KENTUCKY HOME

I'm in George Clooney's bed.

Alas, he's not. But it's the room he chooses in the French Quarter Inn when he returns to Maysville, Kentucky for movie premieres and to remember his Aunt Rosemary (whose film also premiered here). She's got as mural to herself on the grand series portraying the town's history, including a visit by Lafayette, that graces the flood-walls keeping the Ohio River at bay.

Maysville (pop. 9,500), founded in 1784, is a photo-ready town of brick sidewalks, pillared churches and facades that evoke a kinder, gentler era. But its prime lure is its people. Take Judy and Ron, for instance. They run Magee's Bakery, where George shows up to order those famous transparent tarts. (Magee's also supplied the tarts—"a poor man's pecan pie without the nuts and Bourbon"—for Rosemary's wedding. Also for Bob Hope. And Barbara Walters.)

Ron coaches me in working the dough press, then fills my plate with Southern staples: feathery biscuits and sturdier beaten biscuits, piled with country ham; scones, rhubarb sauce, local honey, homemade jam. "We're all about fun here," ex-

claims Judy as she pours my third cup of coffee.

Nona likes her fun, too—the smile that lights her grandmotherly face is your first clue—but she's also all about making it happen. Nona is the doyenne of the National Underground Railroad Museum, occupying a former safe house with its below-ground sanctuary for escaping slaves before the midnight trip to freedom across the Ohio River. She's faced her share of racial prejudice, she allows: "The road isn't always smooth, but you just walk around the puddles." By a good cop/bad cop process of sweet talk and shaming, she's strong-armed artifacts into the museum's domain, from a freed-slave preacher's black coat to a tobacco press invented by the first African-American to win a patent. Shackles are on view. So is the Slave Boy statue, whose lit lantern was the sign of a safe house to store the "hams" (code-speak for "fugitives").

The Kentucky Gateway Museum shares more early history, and serves as home for Kay Browning's amazing collection of miniature rooms, mostly built to 1/12 scale of the originals—meaning candelabra the size of a dime

with their teardrop light bulbs and forks as small as an eyelash. Kay opened her collection to view in 2004, explaining, "These things have to be seen!"—including replicas of Maysville's drug-store, complete with Cokes at the soda fountain.

We break for lunch at Chandler's, the dining destination for everyone from bank execs to construction crews, celebrating Kentucky icons like smothered chicken, country ham, and the Hot Brown. I'd enjoyed that Kentucky staple at De-Sha's the night before: an open-faced sandwich loaded with country ham, turkey, tomatoes and bacon under a blanket of cheese sauce.

With it I sipped a Bourbon (any other spirit is probably illegal within state lines) from Pogue, which prompted a visit to its Maysville distillery, founded in 1876, in brand-new digs since 2012. Young John Pogue orchestrates a tasting of its twin claims: Limestone Landing, a clear whiskey of malted rye, and Old Pogue, a smooth, smoky sip aged seven years.

Maysville's "suburb," Old Washington—a village since 1792—is a living architectural/historical survey, from a log cabin housing 13 kids to

the brick church of 1845, where slaves climbed an outside ladder to separate-but-unequal loft seating (indeed, the slave market was held on the nearby courthouse lawn).

History peels back even earlier at Blue Lick Battlefield State Park, where we over-nighted after surveying the only Revolutionary Army battlefield in Kentucky (reenactments every August)—an unfortunate skirmish in which Daniel Boone took part. Mike, the park's director, fills me in on East vs. West in his home state: "Western Kentucky has a laid back, Southern attitude, while Eastern Kentucky is all about clan and family, a great work ethic," he explains as we dine on catfish and Derby pie. Mark Twain had his own way of typecasting the state: "I hope I'm in Kentucky when the world ends, because Kentucky's always ten years behind."

He may have had Sam's in mind. That's the classic truck stop en route to Lexington, where we breakfasted on eggs, bacon (or choose sausage, country ham, city ham, or fried bologna), grits and biscuits slathered in white gravy.

Lexington is horse country, no doubt about it. It's blanketed by white fences slicing the rolling bluegrass of horse farms, 450 of them, anchored by barns that put many a mansion to shame. In fact, we brake for one called Old Friends, launched by a couple of Boston ex-pats with the quixotic mission of saving thoroughbreds from the glue factory—in other words, a retirement home for champs such as Little Silver Charmer, age 25, pulled off the slaughter truck, and Afternoon Delight, owned by Burt Bacharach, along with 48 others onsite, who canter our way as soon as they spot the pail of carrots.

We then tour Keeneland Race Course, where fans flock to watch training sessions and races, such as April's prep race for the Derby. Its breakfast café draws everyone from racing moguls to us wide-eyed voyeurs.

Save room for lunch at Lexington's new hot spot, Shakespeare and Co.—despite the grand Elizabethan name, it's decorated like a Middle-Eastern bordello. Um—why? Because it's the replica of the same-named bistro in Dubai, whose sheik also owns three horse farms here. Maybe it's those watermelon martinis....

Lexington itself is all about its favorite son, the politician Henry Clay—senator, Secretary of State and Presidential candidate. He's also called The Great Compromiser—maybe because on his stately home, Ashland, which we tour, he owned 50 slaves, yet spoke out for Emancipation. Union troops were stationed here, and the Battle of Ashland was fought on his front lawn.

More of Clay in Lexington's historic district: his office, his church, his alma mater. They circle Gratz Park, which reminds me of an enclave of Old Boston: brick houses, walled gardens, a monumental Carnegie Library anchoring one end and at the other, the campus of Transylvania University, whose students included Jefferson Davis and Cassius Clay.



(Clockwise from top left) Lexington's historic Gratz Park Boasts; Magee's Bakery; Log Cabin-Old Washington, Ky; Main Street, Frankfort, Ky. Photos by Carla Waldemar

Gratz Inn is home to Jonathan's, so named for its forward chef, who reinvents Kentucky's cabin cooking: Think Bourbon-braised short ribs with collard greens; the best shrimp and grits of my lifetime; and the Hot Brown deconstructed into sliders anchored by a sea scallop, all backed by a list of Bourbons that just doesn't quit.

On to Frankfort, the capitol, where yet another version of the Hot Brown is on offer at Serafini's, facing the stately, white-columned Old State Capitol. Don't miss the sweet tea-marinated pork chop with sweet potato-Brussels sprouts-and-bacon hash, or the balsamic-kissed fried green tomatoes with bacon jam.

Art galleries blossom alongside Serafini's, but the most popular art form is found at Buffalo Trace, tracing the path of a grain of corn to a sip of Bourbon since 1787. After a tour, we get to taste: Eagle Rare, a rye-based 10-year-old single-barrel Bourbon, and the flagship Buffalo Trace, a small-batch Bourbon aged over eight years. That'll assure sweet dreams, as if I needed any such prod at the antiques-laden Meeting House B&B and cafe, which Rose and Gary, more Boston transplants, have updated an abode of 1836 ("My dream, his nightmare," Rose admits, fueled by the 450 gallons of paint involved in the transformation).

Plan your visit at www.kentuckytourism.com, 800-225-8747.

SIDE BAR

GAY LEX

"Live and let live is the mantra here," says James Clark, who runs LEXARTS—hired in part, he claims, because he's gay and diversity is welcomed here. Maybe because of the arts, maybe the colleges, whatever, it's "a safe haven, all fagged up," he declares. "We have a gay mayor, and our Pride Parade is shockingly large."

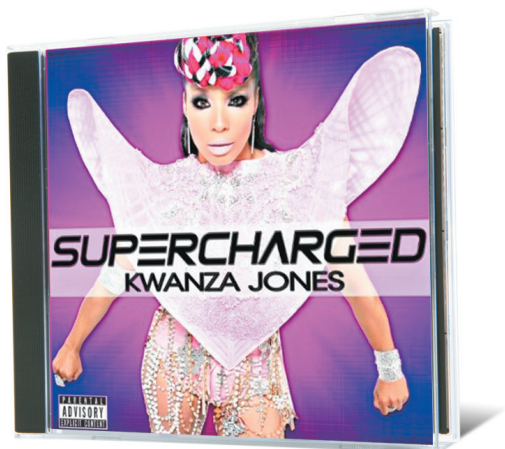
The Bar Complex—the oldest gay bar in the South, with dancing, drag shows and lounge under one roof, designed by the team behind Studio 54

Pulse Nightlife: cozy bar

Soundbar: hip video lounge

Crossings: drinks specials while you boogie

Pride: www.lexpridefest.org



KWANZA JONES *SUPERCHARGED*

Jones declares herself to be a “gladiator in a thong” at the top of her third album. While that sounds both painful and impractical, the vibe continues throughout the bouncy, dance-floor packing album that follows. There’s more than a slight Gaga-ish influence running through the album, even down to an education (in her case Princeton) that indicates that there might be something more behind tracks like “Turn it Up” and “Shatterproof.” Except, there doesn’t really seem to be much beyond the image. Sure, Jones has her charms (“T-E-A-C-H-E-R” is a particularly hot tune), but this brief album runs out of gas long before track 10. There’s too much visible in her effort to be edgy that drains a lot of fun out of the album.



THE JOY FORMIDABLE *WOLF'S LAW*

It hasn’t taken long for this Welsh trio to rise to the top of the indie rock world. They aren’t afraid of big emotions or a big sound – two pieces that sometimes get lost in the more detached rock music of recent years. A lot of this comes down to lead singer Ritzy Brian, whose vocals serve as a calm center amid the musical storm that surrounds her voice. A lot of my favorite music from the “alternative” era, from Sonic Youth to My Bloody Valentine, played in this territory and it is great to hear that it still lives. The band can play it tuneful (opener “The Ladder is Ours”), moody (“Silent Treatment”) or flat out rocking (check out the raging guitars – also from Brian – on “Maw Maw Song”).



TEGAN AND SARA *HEARTTHROB*

It’s been four long years since Tegan and Sara last collaborated on an album, but it was worth the wait. Our favorite gay, identical-twin Canadian singer-songwriters haven’t missed a beat during the time away from the recording studio, crafting an album that is as fresh and bright as their best work. The duo has always been about pairings – their two (naturally) similar voices, their guitars and keyboards – that build into their distinct sound. There are plenty of relationship songs here, examining the good, the bad and the painful of two people getting together. Bouncy pop like “I Couldn’t Be Your Friend” mesh nicely with moodier tunes like “Shock to Your System,” creating an engaging, fulfilling whole.



NEW STANDARDS *SUNDAY MORNING COMING DOWN*

The New Standards approach – minimal, jazzy editions of pop and rock favorites – could be so precious as to be off-putting, but the trio pulls it off via their incredible musicianship and genuine love of the songs they tackle. These aren’t ironic lounge interpretations but heartfelt versions of familiar tunes that uncover new layers of the originals. Chan Poling, John Munson, and Steve Roehm not only have their considerable backgrounds to draw on, but they also have half a dozen years and a trio of albums under their belts, giving the latest collection an extra layer of confidence. They find the depths in everything they touch here, from the Arcade Fire to Neil Young to the Talking Heads, and even breathe life into Harry Nilsson’s overplayed “One.” □

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MARCH SPECIAL NIGHTS:

The Sparkle Show: The other other Mary

Mary Malone & TiNea emcee the show March 9th @ 9:30pm

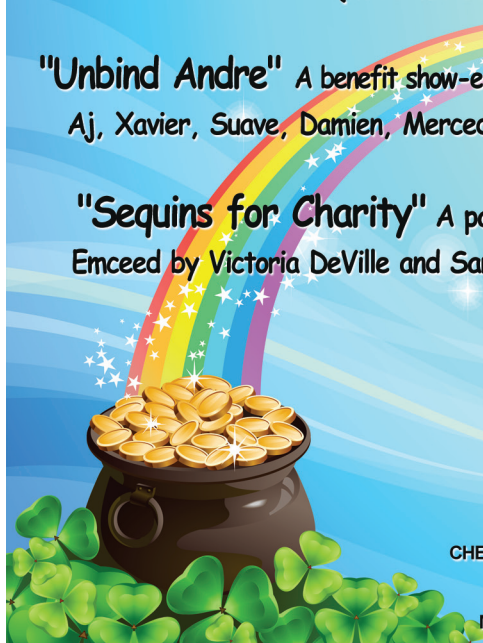
(need we say more...)

"Unbind Andre" A benefit show-emcee Shamika - March 22nd @ 9:30pm

Aj, Xavier, Suave, Damien, Mercedes, Sasha, Ethan, Geneva, Anita

"Sequins for Charity" A pageant for all by Esme Rodriguez

Emceed by Victoria DeVille and Sara Tonin - March 23rd @ 9:00pm



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Kyle Truss is Mr. Twin Cities Leather 2013

KYLE TRUSS and Tommy Rosengren were the two competitors in this year's Mr. Twin Cities Leather contest weekend, with Truss being awarded the title and sash. Twin Cities Leather, the new leather-and-gear store in Minneapolis, presented a week-end-long slate of events in connection with this year's contest.

The weekend started Friday night, Feb. 15, with a "Meet the Candidates" event followed by a Black Party. The main event, the Mr. Twin Cities Leather Contest, took place Saturday evening, Feb. 16. The contest was followed by "LeatherBOMB!" A Victory Party" with DJ MF.

Sunday, Feb. 17 brought a Leather Brunch sponsored and prepared by Cuppa Java, followed by a victory beer bust. All events were held at The Saloon in Minneapolis, one of the weekend's sponsors.

Saturday night's contest and show included judged segments in leather image, onstage question and answer, speech, and talent. In the onstage question-and-answer segment, Truss was asked by one judge, "What are you most afraid of?" His answer: "In all honesty—this, right now," referring to being onstage before the crowd at the Saloon.

Truss' talent presentation combined a magic trick using a deck of cards with electrical torture featuring a big, industrial-strength, nasty-looking electrical switch. Rosengren's talent portion was a demonstration of how to make the perfect banana split—using an accomplice's bare chest as the serving vessel. To conclude his talent demonstration, Rosengren invited members of the audience to sample his ice-cream creation.

Emcees for the weekend were Karri Plowman, one of the three co-owners of Twin Cities Leather, and Camille Collins. Entertainment Friday and Saturday evenings was provided by Chanda Lehr. The entire weekend was dedicated to the memory of the late David Olaf Brown, a/k/a Danielle Charbonneau.

Contest judges were Andrew Bertke, Atoms of Minneapolis; Tynan Fox, Twin Cities Leather; Tony Halverson, The Saloon;



Sash brothers, left to right: Kyle Truss, Mr. Twin Cities Leather 2013, and Ryan Brown, Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2013. Photo by Steve Lenius

Continued on page 52



VOLKSWAGEN CC

Photos by Randy Stern

WHAT EXACTLY is a four-door coupe?

Before we look into that, we must understand what a coupe really is. Merriam-Webster defines a coupe as “a 2-door automobile often seating only two persons; also : one with a tight-spaced rear seat.”

The idea of a coupe has stretched over time to include two seat sports cars to big luxury two-door barges. You could actually seat six or more people in one of the latter. In 1999, General Motors introduced a Saturn S-Series coupe with a third door. The trick is that the third door is hinged from the rear fender of the body. Then, both Saturn and Mazda introduced a pair of four-door coupes – again, both hinged at the rear of the body.

Though the old Saturn Ion and Mazda RX-8 offer up variants of a four-door coupe, the entire concept gets even more complicated. A true four-door coupe denotes that the rear doors are to be hinged at the B-pillar – which would appear to be more of a traditional sedan. The catch is the how the angle and height of the roof line is shaped in comparison with the rest of the body.

The distinction of being the first true four-door coupe goes to the 2005 Mercedes-Benz CLS-Class. Today, only two other brands offer a four-door coupe alongside Mercedes-Benz – BMW and Volkswagen.

Volkswagen jumped into the four-door coupe fray in 2008 with its Passat CC. For all intents and purposes, the CC was essentially the sixth generation global Passat with a sexier body. The CC has been face-lifted for 2013 and continues to sit on top of Volkswagen's North American car lineup – next to the big Touareg SUV.

On the outside, the CC fits the four-door coupe mold. It has a very low-slung body with all of the current Volkswagen design elements. The giveaway of its Passat roots can be seen up front – the wide grille angled as a doppelganger for the mid-sized sedan it shares its DNA with.

One would argue that the CC is much more handsome than its Tennessee-built cousin. There is something alluring about the CC's low height and coupe-like stance. Even with the seventeen-inch alloys and low-

profile Continental tires, the CC is simply a natural beauty worth looking at – even several floors up from the parking lot at work.

The moment you open up the door, the surprises begin. The fear of even considering a four-door coupe would be the perception of coupe-like space for all on board. This is absolutely not true in the CC. The driver and front passenger are treated to power adjustable leatherette seats, which are supported and decently bolstered. Adjustable lumbar support is added for the driver – for both height and level of support. There are plenty of adjustment options for many types of drivers – including this tall and somewhat wide one.

The real surprise is in the back seat. It is made for two adults – up to a certain height. If anyone is 6'2" or taller, you will hit the roof. Legroom was surprisingly good in back. A couple of trips were made with four people in the CC, including people of all sizes and shapes, with no one complaining of any room issues.

The driver has a standard issue Volkswa-

gen dashboard, which is one of the best in the business. Volkswagens are known for being straightforward and logical in terms of driver engagement. Instrumentation was well laid out with an informative center screen for trip and vehicle functions. The screen can be toggled through by one of the redundant switches on the steering wheel.

The center stack housed a touch screen audio interface that also has readouts for the climate control. In this Sport model, the radio featured AM, FM and SiriusXM channels along with Bluetooth connectivity for phone calls and playback of music files. Sound is balanced via the eight speakers strategically located throughout the cabin.

There is a climate setting that will come in handy in winter – a Max button for the front windshield defroster. When it is not enough to clear the window after an overnight frosting – the Max button will do the trick.

Once you slot the key into the ignition and give it a push, the 2.0litre TSI turbocharged four-cylinder engine comes alive. With 200 horsepower on tap, power comes on immediately and fluidly. You will never find any turbo lag in this engine.

One of the reasons for this fluidic power is the six-speed DSG transmission. In Volkswagen-speak, the DSG denotes a dual-clutch gearbox where you will find lightning-quick shifts in both automatic and sport modes. You can select gears through the Tiptronic gate to maximize rev control. However, if you wish to row your own gears and depress a clutch to engage them, the CC Sport with TSI engine comes with a six-speed manual gearbox standard. Either transmission sends power to the front wheels.

To understand the CC a bit more is to feel how it drives. Though it has the look of a sports car and positioned towards the top of VW's heap in North America – there is an elegant balance of these two worlds. The ride is balanced between smooth and firm. Give it a solid highway, and the CC will happily lap it. When presented with bumps and other road imperfections, the CC tries its best to absorb them – though not as smoothly as it could.

There is also some lean on banked curves, but the CC offers up a pretty neutral handling package. The Continental ContiProContact tires did their best to grip on several surfaces, though you could feel the traction control and ABS gather up the CC on snow or caked surfaces. Steering is quite sharp with a great turning radius and action. There is no play in the steering at center. Braking was decent in both normal and panic situations. Pedal feel was fine, but one would need to pre-brake on slicker surfaces to stop the CC.

One of the biggest surprises from the CC came in the form of fuel consumption. Considering this is a German-made four-door coupe with a turbocharged four and a dual clutch automatic gearbox, it may come as a surprise that it turned a mileage figure of 26.5MPG. This came from a perfect mix of city and highway driving.

The CC is priced from \$30,610. This Sport model with the Lighting Package arrived at \$32,535. The CC range scales upward to include a 3.6litre V6 engine and 4Motion all-wheel drive – topping out at about \$42,000.

Because of the perception of four-door coupes, the Volkswagen CC will be a huge

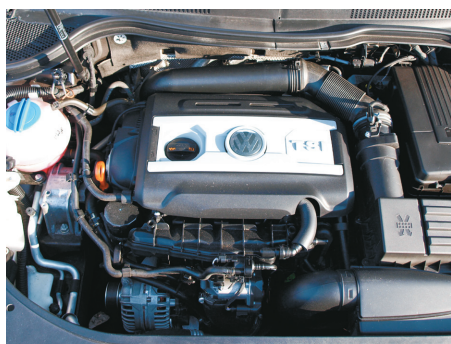
surprise to anyone looking for a sporty, low-slung sedan. Rather, it would be a good alternative to plenty of premium mid-sized sedans – such as the Acura TSX and Buick Regal.

So, what is the definition of a four-door automobile that defies convention and offers just enough room to compare with its more upright competitors? This Volkswagen will have to change Merriam-Webster's entry for the sake of the CC.

THE 40TH ANNUAL TWINCITIES AUTO SHOW

Starting on March 9, the Minneapolis Convention Center will open its doors again to the Twin Cities Auto Show. This year, every automobile sold in the state of Minnesota is available for you to look and even experience.

Interactive activities, such as the Ride-and-Drives and, new for 2013, Camp Jeep(c) – a guided tour of the brand's off-road capabilities demonstrated inside of the Convention Center. There will be an entertainment stage with daily performances for everyone! Our own automotive Contributing Writer, Randy Stern, will be at the Auto Show on Saturday, March 9 and Monday, March 11. For more information, log on to TCAutoShow.com for show times, discounted tickets and other exhibit and entertainment information. Also, see our Calendar section for dates and times when Randy will be at the Auto Show. See you at the show!



LEATHER LIFE

Continued from page 49



Bootblack Mike shining boots during intermission.

Daniel Hennagir, Mr. Twin Cities Leather 2011; and your humble columnist. Tallymaster was Randy Ingram; Den Daddy (contestant handler) was Bud Lile, assisted by Jayson Glynn.

Another sponsor of the Mr. Twin Cities Leather weekend was Fuck Water lubes, many samples of whose products were handed out during the weekend. *Lavender* Magazine was the weekend's media sponsor.

Truss will represent Twin Cities Leather and Minnesota's leather community as he competes in the 35th annual International Mr. Leather contest (www.imrl.com), May 24-27, 2013 (Memorial Day weekend) in Chicago. ■

See more photos online



Back row, left to right: Luke Wallrich, Karri Plowman and Tynan Fox, the three co-owners of Twin Cities Leather, pose in back of new Mr. Twin Cities Leather Kyle Truss.

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DEAR LAVENDER,

About Brett Stevens' conversation with Rep. Andrea Kieffer... it was a well-written, expressive piece, and I was right there with him up until he wrote this: "There is a romanticization of the idea of marriage in the GLBT community. The community tends to talk in terms of "rights" and "benefits," but is less vocal when it comes to "obligations" and "responsibilities" assumed by marriage."

I'm not sure exactly what GLBT community Mr. Stevens is talking about, or who he's been talking to, but myself and my GLBT friends – married and non – are serious and vocal when it comes to the obligations and responsibilities of marriage. We don't romanticize it. We're not confused by it.

It's a dangerous statement Mr. Stevens has written there, because it seems to suggest that the GLBT community simply wants Marriage because they want the stuff that goes with it – without taking into full consideration what the institution of Marriage means. Or worse, it suggests that because we're too enraptured by the idea of Marriage to really "get" it, we might actually be willing to settle for something less, like civil unions. But we won't settle, and here's why: when it comes to the issue of Marriage, the GLBT community that I know is not just talking solely in simple terms of rights and benefits, obligations and responsibilities. We're talking about something bigger. Something that uplifts every community. We are talking about one thing and one thing only: EQUALITY.

Michael Cohen-Elyanow

U OF M GLBTA OFFICE 20TH ANNIVERSARY FEBRUARY 18, 2013



Photo by Sophia Hantzes



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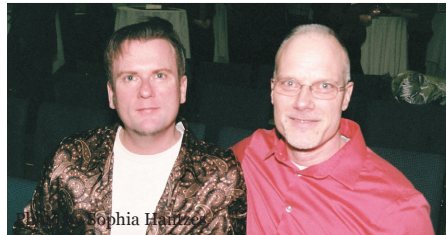


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PILLARS OF THE COMMUNITY



Marty Rouse, HRC National Field Director; Brian Moulton, HRC Legal Director.
Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Sometimes last minute engagements can be the most interesting. I found out the day of the event two Human Rights Campaign directors were in town to do a townhall meeting about their work. I raced over to CAMP Cabaret in St. Paul to meet them. I'm glad I had this opportunity.

HRC is a well-known GLBT rights organization with its ubiquitous yellow equal sign on a blue background. However, we don't often hear much about the important work they do. This was a way for me to get to know more about what they do and hopefully give you some information as well.

I met Marty Rouse and Brian Moulton in the main bar on the way into the cabaret area before they addressed the crowd. Rouse is a tall, cheerful and earnest man with a ready smile and a firm handshake. He is the National Field Director for HRC and organizes the "boots on the ground" HRC volunteers and staff.

Moulton is more reserved until you begin talking with him about his work and his passion, the legal work for HRC. He's the HRC Legal Director and works with GLBT litigation filing "friend of the court" or amicus briefs, and background research and strategy.

Each man has a very different job but in my brief discussion with them both, they tackle the issues with equal passion and dynamism.

Rouse explained how HRC has national and state strategies they employ to address GLBT issues in the field. They have been working closely with state organizations on marriage equality in Minnesota, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Illinois. But it isn't limited to that. They are also engaged in the civil union fight in Colorado where the state senate has passed that legislation and is poised to get a vote in their house of representatives.

Colorado has been getting the headlines

lately but they also worked in Wyoming.

They sent an HRC representative to Cheyenne, Trevor Chandler. In Wyoming the civil union and same sex marriage bills didn't pass, but made it to the floor. Rouse said the effort wasn't just bipartisan but was led by Republicans. So many things happening right now, he said. But that's not all HRC does.

Even where it seems there isn't much going for the GLBT community, HRC is finding a way to make a difference. For example in San Antonio, Texas and Jacksonville, Florida, they are building coalitions of businesses and religious leaders to pass laws against employment discrimination. We may not be able to get statewide measures enacted in those places, but HRC is working to get ordinances passed in these large cities. They are also working hard on the federal level to get the Employment Non-discrimination Act, or ENDA passed by Congress. While Minnesota may protect GLBT residents against being 'fired while being gay' not all our friends in other states are so lucky.

Moulton's job is quite different. While Rouse is directing resources and personnel to political hotspots, Moulton works behind the scenes with GLBT civil rights partners giving them the intellectual firepower and support to challenge laws and legal dilemmas.

For example, HRC is working with partners on the Supreme Court the case regarding California's Proposition 8 and the case challenging the federal Defense of Marriage Act. They aren't the lead litigators, but doing the necessary organizing and support work to challenge these legal questions.

He explained the issues of equal protection, due process and even legal standing affecting these cases. One interesting note is they're raising the idea of a standard of scrutiny in laws. There are different standards of review in the judicial branch when deciding

whether law is constitutional or not. The "rational basis" idea has the least scrutiny and up until now laws regarding the GLBT community have fallen into that category. However, with the striking down of sodomy laws nationwide in *Lawrence v. Texas*, the question arises whether laws affecting the GLBT community should be considered more suspect. Fascinating.

Both Rouse and Moulton demonstrated such unbridled passion I wondered if they were quite new to the organization. Working day in and day out on these issues could burn a person out. Surprisingly, Rouse has been with HRC seven years and Moulton eight. For people who had been in the trenches that long, their enthusiasm and compassion hasn't seemed to wane. I think I know part of the reason why.

They both nodded and recited what the head of HRC believes about the organization. "Chad Griffin refers to young people in the community and asks his team, 'What are we doing to make their life better?'" That is something we should all consider.

When we think of political movements, we may think of rallies, letters, lobbyists, and court cases. But, there is more to it than that. The Human Rights Campaign has been working quietly in the background giving support to local and state organizations and lead litigants. Trevor Chandler, an HRC regional field organizer, and I spoke briefly after my meeting with Rouse and Moulton. He said HRC tries to avoid grabbing the spotlight leaving the kudos to those on the front lines. But without important support by HRC, many of these opportunities could be wasted. Without background support like Rouse and Moulton, the infrastructure of our movement could come crashing down. I'm glad I got to meet these 'behind the scene' pillars of the GLBT community. ■

VANGUARD

SOME PEOPLE have questioned why I'm writing about ideas other than the "all or nothing" same-sex marriage legislation proposed by Minnesotans United for All Families among other groups. They have also questioned why *Lavender* would publish my work, my questions, and my concerns because it has been argued it's counter-productive. These are fair questions that deserve honest answers. Therefore I will attempt to do so.

Four months ago, I read these words in the *Pioneer Press* in an article by Doug Belden called, 'DFL Balks at putting gay marriage on the front burner' dated November 8, 2012:

For Senate Minority Leader Tom Bakk, DFL-Cook, who has said he'll seek to become majority leader, a fight over marriage is not

a top priority.

"I think anybody that has policy ideas needs to find a way to put them on the back shelf right now. This state has serious financial challenges," Bakk said at the news conference.

House Minority Leader Paul Thissen, DFL-Minneapolis, who is in line to become House speaker, said it's too soon to set off in a new direction for marriage.

Asked whether he would sign a bill legalizing gay marriage, [Gov.] Dayton demurred. "We just had an election yesterday," he said. "I think it's time for everybody to catch their breath."

Aides said Dayton's support for same-sex marriage has not weakened but that he didn't want to appear to be pre-empting agenda setting by new lawmakers.

In the same article Sen. Scott Dibble, Rep.

Karen Clark, and MN United for All Families' Richard Carlbom said the conversation must continue and we need to think about what to do next. That was thin soup indeed.

So, I wrote 'DFL's Big Gay Farce' because it seemed once again nothing was going to get done. No one was really agitating. The political actors all seemed willing to complacently accept the status quo which was no Marriage Amendment but no same-sex relationship recognition either. It was into this breach *Lavender* provided me a venue to question authority. After questioning motives, I then came back with a compromise position. Of course, at that point no one was saying much and the DFL was talking about doing nothing.

Three months ago I wrote we should work toward something, a compromise

Continued on page 56 ➔

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between doing nothing and asking for it all. On December 13, 2012, *Lavender* published 'Earnest Money' urging something to happen from the failure of the Marriage Amendment. I asked for a repeal of the state DOMA law.

The December 13, 2012 issue also included a powerful essay from *Lavender*'s editor, Andy Lien titled, 'The Psychology of Victory.' Let's keep in mind, the DFL and GLBT activists for a month hadn't uttered a peep to the public about plans toward fulfilling a long-term promise to the community. They had told us they were FOR us and once they were in power they would make sure the state would recognize our relationships. Lien said these important words in that article:

I don't know where you are in this process of talking about what happened, where we are now, and what's coming up. I don't blame you if you're in the same place I was when I was approached with the proclamation that Marriage Equality has been put on the back burner. You might disagree that it has been, you might agree that it should be, you might be in the same place I was and want to say, "stop talking right now." I understand.

We can't stop talking right now. As the only media outlet dedicated to this GLBT community, we have got to keep talking.

And keep talking we did. For over a month, *Lavender* was the only publication saying we need to step up and get this issue moving. They got me an interview with the only DFLer in that 'back burner' story who was as miffed as most of us were. That person was Sen. John Marty. On December 11, 2012, he spoke with me and confirmed he'd propose a bill. It was something, far more than had been promised by anyone else. That interview wasn't published until January 10, 2013 issue, but it seemed, Marty was our only hope at that point.

Two months ago, December 20, 2012, MN United for All Families announced it would lobby to legalize same-sex marriage, according to MPR's Tom Scheck. In the article, press secretary Jake Loesch is quoted as saying:

"All of this is initial planning and we're just starting to communicate and put all of our plans together," Loesch said. "But the goal of the organization will be to make 2013

the year that we secure the freedom to marry for all couples in Minnesota."

This was great. As far as I was concerned, the more the merrier. We needed to get this topic white hot in order to get something passed. Since the DFL leaders including the governor didn't seem to believe it mattered, we had to get the community involved and active.

I believed the Marty interview would help jump-start the discussion but another problem seemed to arise. It seemed DFL leaders were trying to persuade people that the Supreme Court would "hear two cases challenging laws that define marriage as only the union of a man and a woman, he [then presumptive House speaker Paul Thissen] suggested lawmakers may wait until after the justices rule." This was reported December 10, 2012 by Bill Salisbury in the *Pioneer Press*, 'Minnesota budget deficit the No. 1 priority for incoming legislature.'

So two months ago, I wrote and *Lavender* Magazine published 'Waiting for Superman' urging the GLBT community not to fall for this 'wait and see' tactic. Meanwhile, Gov. Dayton was busy telling us same-sex relationship recognition wasn't something he'd do anything substantive to help along. In the January 8th, 2013 piece by Baird Helgeson, Dayton said he's not going push this issue up any mountain.

One month ago, in January 24, 2013's issue, I wrote "What's in a Name."

For some reason, my pushing for alternatives and compromises was seen by some as undermining the same-sex marriage effort. How this works I'll never understand but some people were furious. Meanwhile, I just thought I was continuing a conversation that had been dropped by everyone except *Lavender*. In fact, *Lavender* editor Andy Lien also made the point nothing seemed to be happening and time was ticking in the February 7, 2013 issue, 'A little nudge:'

I'm not going to tell you that these conversations are easy (not that the VOTE NO ones were). We still need to talk to people who don't believe same-sex couples should join marriage. What's different, though, is that the talks have to also happen with people we see as friendly, our allies in either political affiliation or Allies in self-identification. Talking to people

about the importance of the freedom to marry and the priority of civil rights usually involves telling people they're wrong. If it's not explicitly said, it's implied. It's saying that by thinking the freedom to marry should be put off until after the important stuff is handled, you are incorrect in not seeing civil rights for what they are: priorities."

Lien never wrote about anything except the passage of same-sex marriage, but she identified the movement as going too slowly. We were being pushed aside and things didn't happen and I was concerned. If we don't move quickly enough, the impetus could fall to pieces and we'd get nothing at all, which is something I cannot abide.

So, like I did with my second article in *Lavender*, I continued pushing for something even if it means a compromise. I had a conversation with Rep. Andrea Kieffer (R) who supported the Marriage Amendment but listened to arguments from our side about relationship recognition. I have reached out to several activists and legislators and spoken with them off the record. I'm trying to get a two-sided conversation going.

Since I'm not seeing real movement by the GLBT community and I don't see a coherent path forward, it appears same-sex marriage in Minnesota is stalling.** In fact, in my interview with Richard Carlbon of MN United for All Families, I tried to express my concern this isn't spreading and we need a plan B, as it were. This too hasn't been well received which is fine. I have no problem with criticism of my ideas or my treatment of them.

However, I do think my intentions have been honorable. I haven't done a single thing to argue against same-sex marriage. All I've done, and everyone at *Lavender* for that matter, has been to drive the discussion and movement forward. We were the ones who stood up and questioned political leaders who didn't want to do anything. We have tried to motivate and give ideas to the community. I don't believe that makes us the problem. In the past four months, *Lavender* and I have tried to move this issue forward. We have done so before other people jumped into to the fight.

The DFL leadership and some activists have argued they have been working behind the scenes. That is fine but why were we

left in the dark? Sen. Marty promised to propose a same-sex marriage bill in January. Why wait? Why the secrecy? There is nothing complicated about the bill, it's been introduced before. I think criticism of us has not been fair or consistent with the facts on the ground. We have been part of the solution, not part of the problem. Those who criticize us, please remember that. We are both on the same side.

****Editor's Note: This piece was written and went to press as Senate File 925 and House File 1054 to legalize same-sex marriage were introduced. □**

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Governor Mark Dayton

Phone: (651) 201-3400

Email: <http://mn.gov/governor/contact-us/form/> (Web Contact Form)

Senator Tom Bakk

Phone: (651) 296-8881

Email: sen.tom.bakk@senate.mn

Representative Paul Thissen

Phone: (651) 296-5375

Email: rep.paul.thissen@house.mn

Representative Erin Murphy

Phone: (651) 296-5496

Email: rep.erin.murphy@house.mn

See also:

"The DFL's Big Gay Farce" from Issue 457, November 29, 2012

"Three of Four Top Elected Minnesota Politicians Comment on the Marriage Debate" from Issue 458, December 13, 2012

"'Earnest Money:' Repeal DOMA Now" from Issue 458, December 13, 2012

"Why We Can't Wait" an Interview with Sen. John Marty from Issue 460, January 10, 2013

"Waiting for Superman" from Issue 460, January 10, 2013

"Don't Skip Dessert" an Interview with Rep. Ryan Winkler from Issue 461, January 24, 2013

"What's In A Name?" A Case for Civil Unions from Issue 461, January 24, 2013

"Outreach: Conversation with Rep. Andrea Kieffer (R)" from Issue 462, February 7, 2013

"Carrie Chapman Catt's Winning Plan" from Issue 462, February 7, 2013

"Our Family Albums" from Issue 463, February 21, 2013

"Talking Strategy with Richard Carlborn [of Minnesotans United for All Families]" from Issue 463, February 21, 2013

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SKIRTING THE ISSUES | Ellen Krug

Anniversary

A FAMILY anniversary coincides with the day this column is due to my editor.

The anniversary?

A suicide.

My father. 1990. Fifty-three-years old. Depressed and alcoholic. Smith & Wesson .38 caliber. Bathtub. Mom found him.

That's usually what people want to know, but are too polite to ask. It's like rubbernecking at that car accident on the other side of the highway.

Glad that isn't me.

Anyone can be a suicide survivor—children, siblings, parents, lovers, and friends. When I encounter another survivor, it's as if we speak a unique language, one grounded in a special reality.

A reality cloaked in stigma.

Let's admit it: suicide is at the bottom of the death hierarchy.

After all, suicide isn't like giving one's life for their country (the word "honorable" attaches to that), or like dying from cancer. For sure, cancer's a crappy way to go, but the awe factor for others who see one struggling at least gives that death some kind of meaning.

A bit lower on the hierarchy is dying from heart attacks, or strokes, or burst aneurisms, endings that people at least don't consciously bring upon themselves.

Rounding out the "acceptable" deaths are accidents—car, plane, bike and work. "Too early," or "such a tragedy," are what people say about that kind of dying.

Suicide, on the other hand, gets no respect. First off, people don't know what to say. They dance around it, not wanting to insult the survivor, but also not understanding what survivorship really means. In the end, it's as if the decedent barely ever existed—if you don't acknowledge the death, it's not necessary to acknowledge that someone actually pulled a trigger, or strung a rope, or jumped from a bridge.

Then there's pity—*how awful for you and your mother!* Or worse, suspicion. Once, someone asked, "So, tell me: does depression run in your family?"

I thought, *Only when idiots like you ask such questions.*

With my father, the issue wasn't "could I have prevented it," or "why didn't he get help?" I accepted that Dad did something that I couldn't control.

Instead, every time this year, I wonder

whether I've got that suicide gene—a wiring defect that means it might be just a bit easier for me to follow in my father's footsteps.

Some refer to it as a "predisposition." I call it familial osmosis. Did I absorb too much of something bad?

No, I've never attempted *it*. Yes, I've thought about *it*, particularly in 2006 when my soul mate of thirty-some years found my replacement. I've always had a suicide scale of 1 to 5. Back in '06, I ratcheted up to 4.75 one night after a particularly crushing incident. However, I remembered something that stopped me cold.

I'm not him, I realized. I'll never be like him. How could I hurt those who love me? They'd forever wonder whether they could have prevented it? No. Never.

I forced myself to bed that night. Fate gave me a reprieve in the form of sleep. In the morning I felt better. I felt more better every morning thereafter.

I can't promise that I'd never do *it*. If confronted with an Alzheimer's diagnosis or the prospect of months of pain owing to something incurable, I'd pull a trigger, for sure. I believe all of us should have the right to end our lives with dignity and control. Since the government doesn't allow for euthanasia, I'd take matters into my own hands.

Of course, before I did *it*, I'd have one extremely wonderful party.

Still, this doesn't extend to checking out simply because you're unhappy. That's where I draw the line. Unhappiness can be changed. We have the ability to learn and grow, regardless of age or most conditions in life.

Which gets me back to being a suicide survivor.

In 1990, I didn't understand the legacy that attaches when a close family member kills themselves. I didn't realize that it would scar me forever, or that I'd never fully get past the image of my father tasting the raw cold steel of a gun barrel pressing against his tongue.

Twenty-three years later, I've got a much better idea. It is, as I've written, like my father's stood in the back of every room I enter.

Now I understand; his suicide will be with me forever.

Until I die. ■

Ellie Krug is the author of *Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change* (Stepladder Press). She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com

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to leadership. In this specific case of same-sex ceremonies and weddings, the signs are clear: people are already celebrating their relationships with these types of ceremonies. The laws will follow. That's where you come in. And that's where we need you to join us in this vision of legalizing Same-Sex Marriage.

To say that campaigning and voting for Same-Sex Marriage is an "overreach" is the same kind of thinking that diminishes a conversation to the same effect as "homosexuality is a choice." It stops the conversation where it is and doesn't give it the attention it obviously deserves, the attention it demands. The people to whom social justice and equal rights is an overreach are the people who will never see its merit. They will never "be ready" for this. I'm guessing that they don't know anyone who is openly gay or lesbian because, if they did, they'd know that the most effect this legislation would have on their lives is that they might have more weddings to attend.

To the GOP, let me encourage you that by voting for Same-Sex Marriage, you will be fully claiming both an existing and a new group of GLBT supporters who align with your conservative values but have been waiting for you to step up to take this liberty-furthering measure.

To the DFL, voting for Same-Sex Marriage aligns with your DFL values and those of your Governor. You are in control as the majority and will be held to a higher level of scrutiny and accountability if Marriage does not prevail. Claim your leadership role and bring your state to where it needs to be in this Civil Rights movement.

As a leader in the media, it is my responsibility to make sure Lavender discusses the hard topics in addition to covering its usual editorial calendar. When you're home for the summer with your constituents, I know that your job isn't on hiatus—you're still working. Know that I will be, too, and we'll be covering whatever transpired in these next few months; hopefully, with glory, laud, and honor.

There are always risks in any job, but I will never shirk away from doing the right thing because of those risks. I hope you can see your role in a similar light and do the right thing by voting to legalize Same-Sex Marriage in Minnesota.

With hope and gratitude,
Andrea Lien, Managing Editor
Lavender Magazine ■



The Return of the Skort—Part 1 (A special Dateland noir!)

IT WAS after midnight on a Saturday night. I was at a party in the suburbs. The town doesn't matter. They're interchangeable. They all smell of gin, chlorine and the desperation of people who have grown disappointed with their "great rooms." Everyone at the party was drunk. And not in a good way. This was a straight, middle-aged crowd who were drawn together not by common interests but by proximity. Even their children didn't like each other. They played together with the weary commiseration of prisoners of war who shared a common enemy.

The novelty of these parties had ended long before. What started as a cheeky take on their parents' 1970s Saturday night ritual of dressing in paisley prints, drinking elaborately named cocktails, and practicing casual adultery had turned into an actual re-creation of such sad madness. They all yearned to break free of the joyless drinking and stale friendships and form new relationships with people outside their neighborhood. But every Saturday night, something would cause them to congregate again. On this evening, they were celebrating the installation of a margarita machine in one of their kitchens. It was a huge, noisy beast that constantly churned crushed ice the color of stomach acid.

I was invited to the party as a novelty. When life became so achingly dull that the couples might be forced to examine their life choices, they'd invite a shiny object to distract them from painful insight. And, when invited, I'd almost always make the long trek from my home to the party. Why? Because it gave me a glimpse into what my life would have become had I decided to follow the path prescribed to me at birth. I'd be living in a large house with not enough furniture, too many kids, and a well-meaning but dull husband, aching to go to the ballet and the theatre and have meaningful chats with cultured friends about the importance of art.

And, so, these events served as an endorsement of my chaotic, selfish and free-

spending lifestyle. Also, they always have karaoke at these parties, and I never say no to karaoke!

By 11 p.m., the party had crossed the soggy line between tipsy sentimentality to volcanic eruptions of marital rage. I tried to lighten the mood by dragging one of the more maligned husbands into a duet of Captain and Tennille's "Muskrat Love," but it only served to remind his wife of how unadorable their life had become.

And then the blizzard hit. Snowflakes the size of dinner plates turned the moonless sky bright white. There was no way I could make it home.

Every couple at the party eagerly offered to shelter me that night. But from past experience, accepting such hospitality came with a heavy price. I'd be required to stay up until dawn nodding rhythmically to their tales of middle-aged malaise while fending off their sloppy sexual advances. There seems to be only one thing that straight couples crave when drunk out of their minds, and that's to shove their tongues down the throat of the nearest lesbian.

And, so, I did a Google search on nearby hotels. There were only two. One was so far down the hotel food chain that it didn't dare describe itself as a motel. It was, instead, a motor inn, which suggested it might be safer to sleep in your car. Even the drawing on the web site that represented the worn lobby included sketches of stick-thin women wearing garish clothing and inhaling cigarettes. Since I'm not a prostitute, I dialed the other place, a bed and breakfast called the Auberge.

"You're in luck," said the innkeeper. Although it was midnight, she sounded wide-awake, as if she had been sitting by the phone at high-alert, waiting for it to ring. "Every room is available. You have your pick."

And this, my friends, is where our story really begins.

(Tune in next time to learn if I survive the night!) ■

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Menopausal Moaning and I Need More Room

Dear Ms. Behavior:

My girlfriend Jodi is only 39 but she's already going through peri-menopause. I feel badly for her – but I also find it tedious. (I'm 28.) Her incessant complaints are hard to take, and doesn't do much for our romantic relationship.

Last night, we were both awake at 3 a.m. and Jodi took my hand in hers and put it on her chest. I was happy because I thought she wanted me to touch her breasts. I was tired but I thought, "What the hell, I'll go for it." After a moment, she removed my hand and said, "I really just wanted you to feel how sweaty I am."

How can I support her in her current stage of life and also get her to understand that we still need to keep things between us at least a little hot?

-NOT DEAD YET

Dear Not Dead Yet

Hot sweats definitely aren't sexy, but they don't have to be the death knell for romance, either.

As annoying as the complaints may be, try to get it up to be a little more empathic toward Jodi as she goes through this hormonal experience. That doesn't mean that you have

to actively participate in all of Jodi's bodily sensations as they happen, but a little kindness may go a long way toward bringing the two of you closer. Once you've clearly established yourself as an ally, it may be easier to explain how the two of you can work toward sustaining erotic feelings, and why you don't want your fingers dragged through a puddle of sweat in the middle of the night.

Dear Ms. Behavior:

My partner Rufus had a stomach bug and it took him a couple of weeks to fully recover. Of course I took good care of him, but we slept separately so that I wouldn't catch it. This was the first time in our six-year relationship that we've ever slept apart. At first, I hated sleeping apart. I missed his body in our bed and I missed cuddling with him. But after a while, I found that I liked having the extra room to move around in the bed and actually slept better.

Rufus finally recovered and moved back into our bedroom last night. I barely slept at all. We kept bumping into each other during the night, and his snoring woke me up several times. To my surprise, I found that I actually felt crowded. Now I wonder if I should suggest separate bedrooms. It's clear

that it's better for my sleep, but would that be selfish?

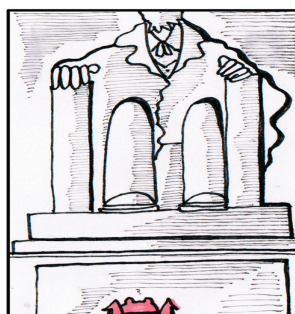
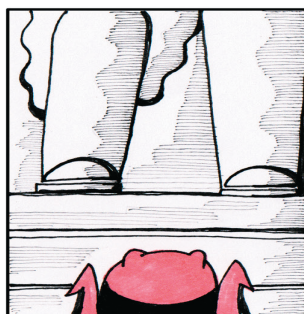
-JAKE

Dear Jake,

Okay, so the novel experience of being able to spread out in bed whetted your appetite for more – what's the problem? The urge to sleep alone isn't a relationship betrayal. Your guilty feelings over enjoying the extra breathing space may suggest that you don't get enough alone time in general. If that's the case, an occasional night in the guest room might be helpful to you and to your relationship. But there's no need to make it an all or nothing decision – i.e. always sleeping together vs. always sleeping apart. Ask Rufus how he'd feel about sleeping separately on occasion. He may appreciate the alone time too. Another low-drama option would be to once in a while say, "Honey, I'm feeling restless. I think I'll sleep in the guest room tonight." But only do it when you're on good terms – never after a fight. You don't want sleeping apart to be linked with any negative associations (even unconsciously). □

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The Amazing Shadows

IT'S SO hot he's naked, this heartbroken boy, curled up on his bed, hands on his stomach, wrenching out his pain. It's a breathtaking pain, you know, that'll make you stutter and gasp for air. His voice trembles when he talks to himself. "Stop crying," he whispers. He wants to vomit, but he can't.

And there's his stupid phone sitting on his stupid nightstand. His phone brought on all this, where there are text messages stored from earlier in the day. Unhappy messages solidifying what should've happened some time before. Messages that list reasons to break up, and the boy in his bed knows they should, but only his boyfriend is brave enough to execute.

The phone, it's the thing of recorded memories. First Message Ever: "It was nice meeting you," dated nine months before. And since then the phone recorded times when butterflies fluttered, when the first dates were made, when dreams were swapped.

He reads the message that says, "We shouldn't be together. It's better for both of us" and his heart sinks. His lungs fill with fluid. Suddenly he is drowning. And he sees what once upon a time was their future: he sees himself looking into his boyfriend's eyes, sharing their vows, putting rings on their fingers, moving into a home, buying a dog. He sees in this text message lawns

mowed, dinners cooked, children raised, love made. He sees what they say you see just before you die: He sees all his life before him in a single burst so bright that it makes him cry...

I am not an affectionate person.

It's partly why this all happened.

I am a hypocrite. I write about silly, romantic things. I write about living loud and loving deep. On paper, I wish I lived this way. But I'm an impostor. I can't execute in real life the romance in my mind. I stand on my soapbox and scream to you sappy messages of intimate bliss, and all the while I can't find the courage in me to live my words.

I am self-absorbed. I've had always this hunger for everyone to like me—an unrealistic, egotistical want if ever there was one. And I'm too aloof for even a try.

"Maybe it's because you've felt no affection," a shrink once told me. Yes, Maybe, I think, and I think I can't be the only one (am I?).

I can think that there are three people in my family who ever showed me any affection, who ever made me feel wanted. Two of them are dead, and I've never had chance to spend much time with the third. Everyone else seemed ambivalent to my existence, Dad included.

Mom died when I was 11, and there-

after I was raised as the butt of too many pranks, too many cruel words, too much degradation, from the people I depended on as "guardians." I was a nuisance with no friends. For seven years after Mom died, no one in the world wanted me, or so I felt (and how pitifully self-absorbed is that?).

In college, I fell into an abusive relationship. The bastard showed me enough affection to keep me at his side, but to him I was a dog, submissive and pitiful. I was something to have dominion over, something to own. Cruelty knew my name then as never it had before.

Then *he* came along, my second boyfriend, to remind me about happiness. He took me on dates, bought me flowers, held me at night, gave me my kisses. And we've broken up...

So there's now this boy on his bed, wrenching out his pain, having been unable to show affection to the man who was the first to show affection to him.

But the boy has real friends and the boy has seen affection. What once was a dark, wretched, affection-less station in life is shown now to be mere shadows in the face of first light.

When we realize that our scars are shadows, we remember shadows require light.

And your shadows... Have you seen them? □

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